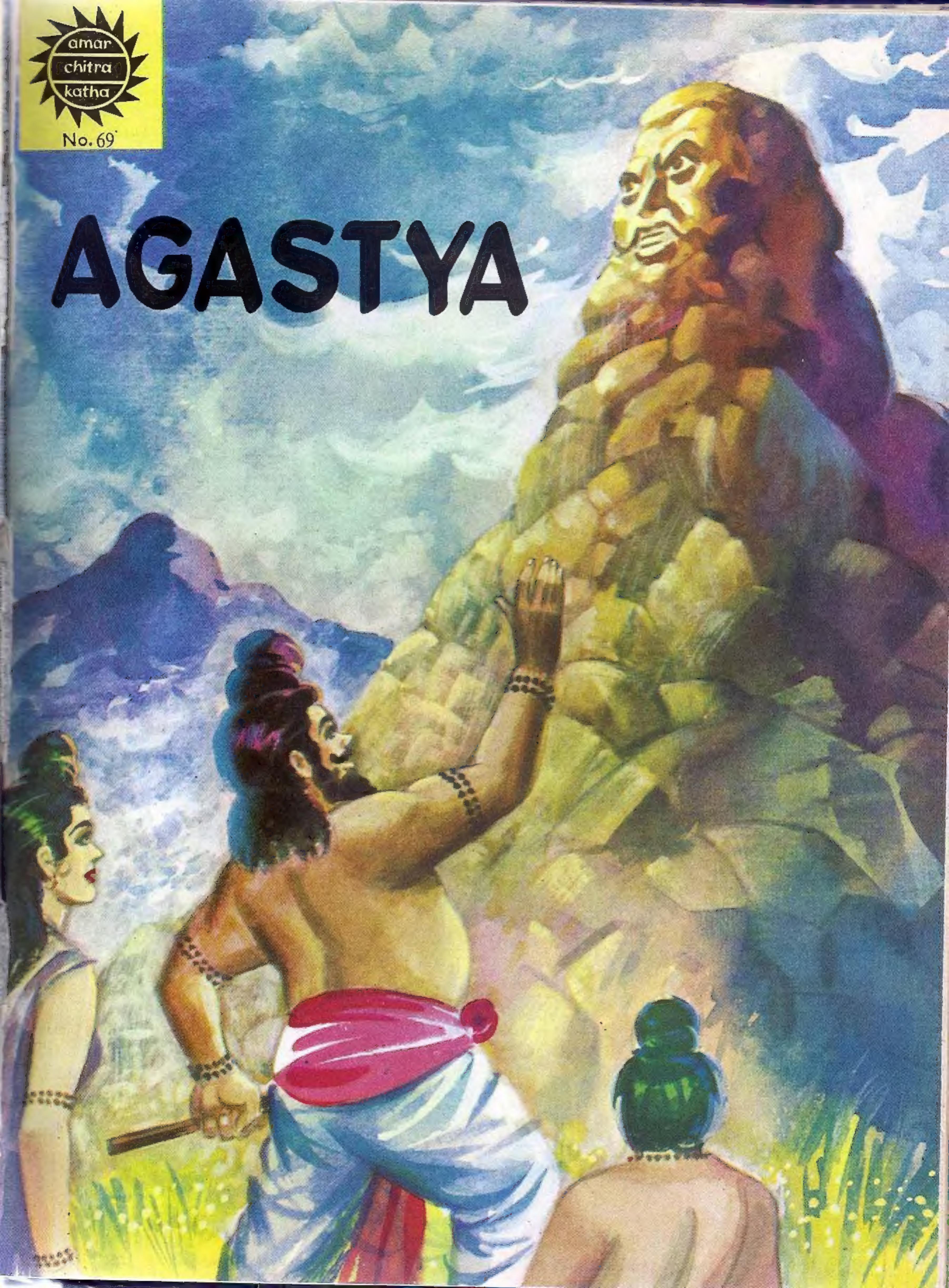




No. 69

AGASTYA



Agastya is perhaps the most famous of the Rishis of India. His exploits are as well-known in the South of India as in the North. Agastya, besides, is a familiar figure in South-East Asian mythology, too.

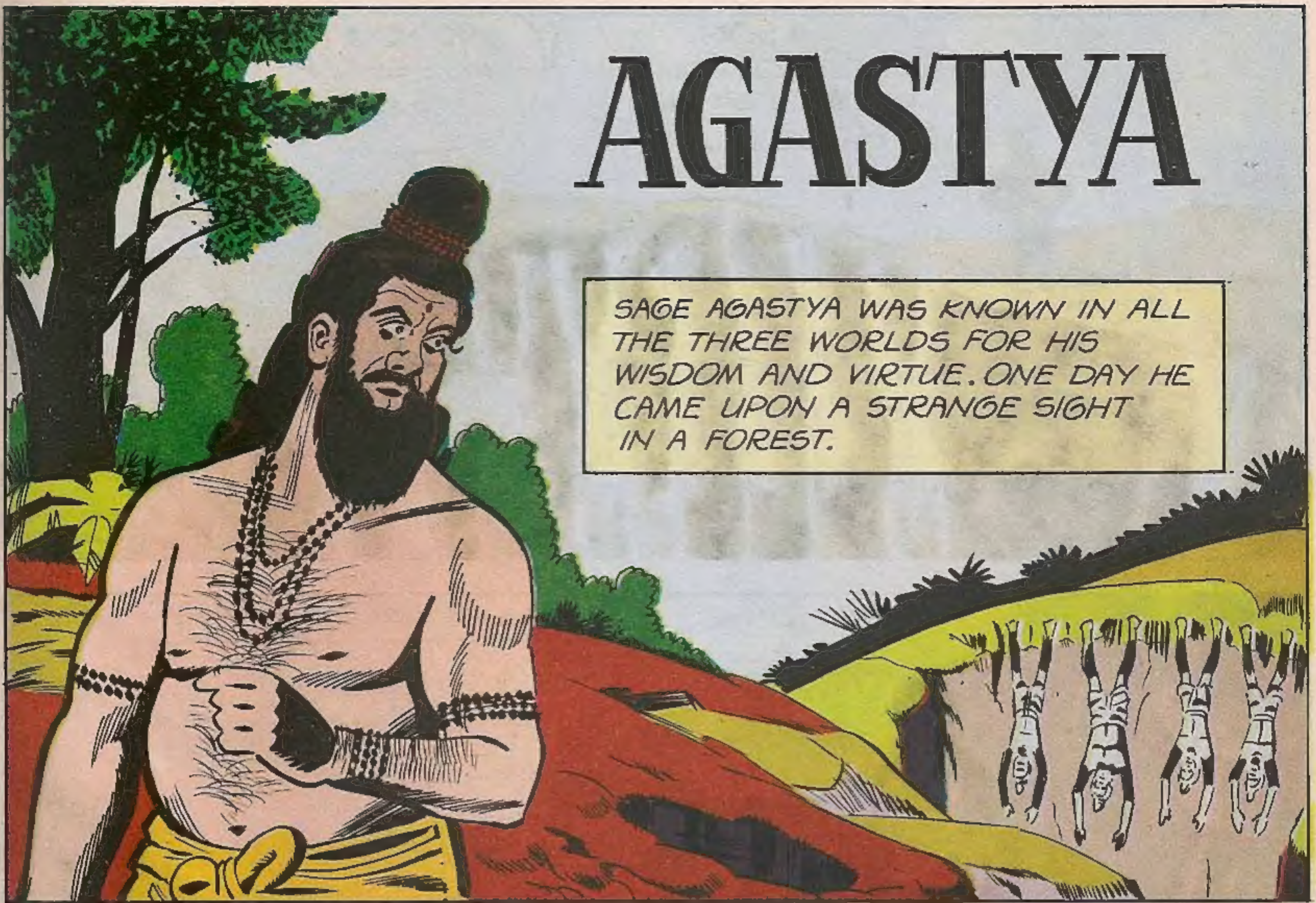
Scattered over the *Vedas*, the *Brahmanas* and the *Puranas*, the references to Agastya are far too numerous to be coherent. Yet there are some points where the diverse accounts seem to converge. For instance there is general agreement that he was born in a jar, which gave him the name Kumbha - Sambhava; that his wife was Lopamudra; that he often acted as the friend, guide and philosopher to Indra; that though almost a dwarf in size he had disciplined himself to achieve incredible feats of strength, and last but not least, he had had close links with the land to the south of the Vindhya mountains.

Parallels to the stories in Sanskrit are popular in Tamil. Some scholars identify Agastya as the author of the hoary Tamil treatise, "AKATTIYAM" and as the teacher of the author of "TOLKAPPIYAM", the oldest extant work on linguistics in Tamil.

Whatever may be the verdict on these disputed details, Agastya's role in the cultural integration of our country appears to have been important and significant,

AGASTYA

SAGE AGASTYA WAS KNOWN IN ALL THE THREE WORLDS FOR HIS WISDOM AND VIRTUE. ONE DAY HE CAME UPON A STRANGE SIGHT IN A FOREST.

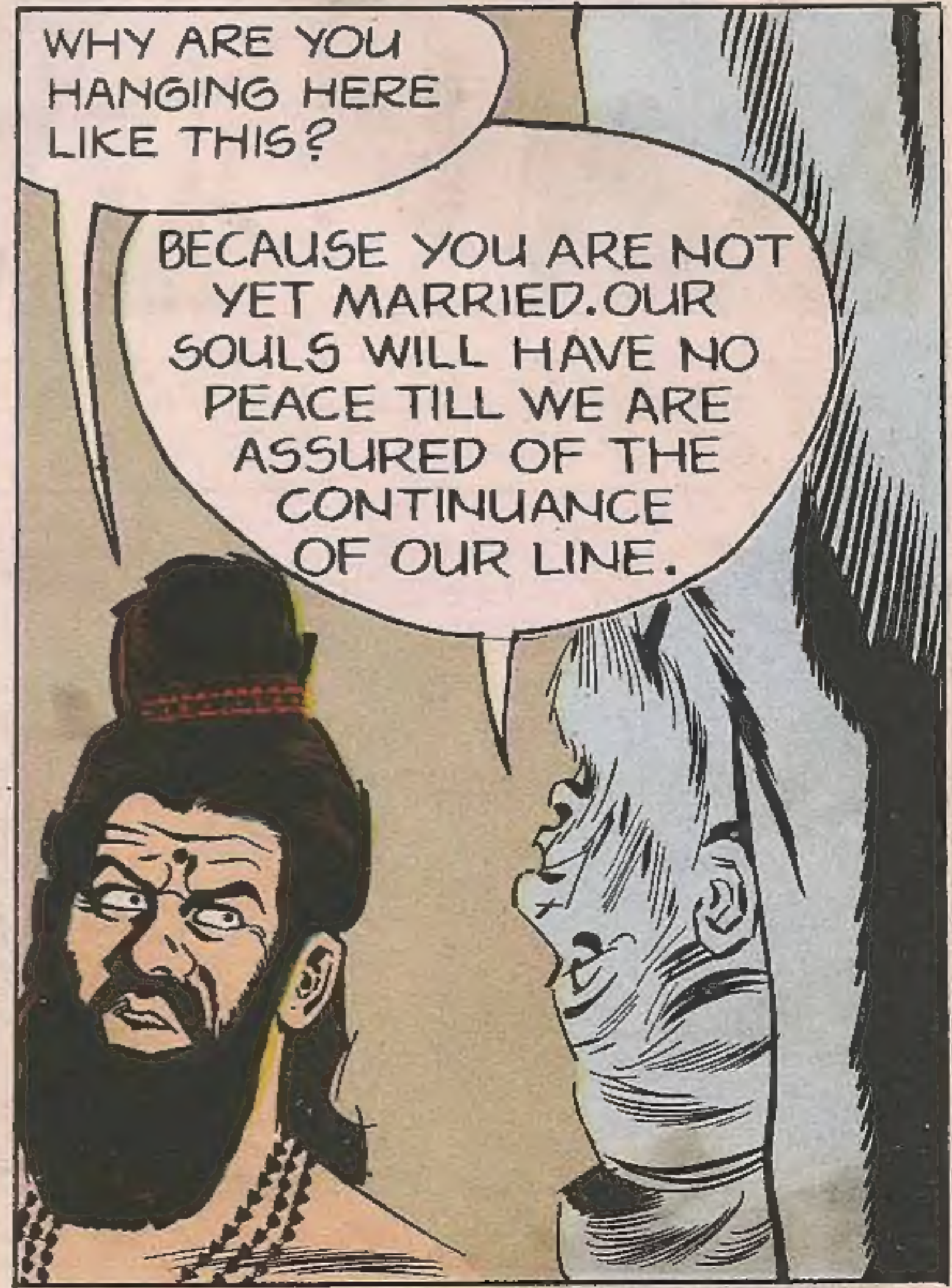


WHO
COULD
THEY BE?

WE ARE
YOUR
ANCESTORS.

WHY ARE YOU
HANGING HERE
LIKE THIS?

BECAUSE YOU ARE NOT
YET MARRIED. OUR
SOULS WILL HAVE NO
PEACE TILL WE ARE
ASSURED OF THE
CONTINUANCE
OF OUR LINE.





A SON
BORN OF YOU CAN
REDEEM US.

AND YOU TOO
WILL ESCAPE
THIS HELL.



O REVERED ONES,
I SHALL
ACT FOR
YOUR
REDEMPTION.



AS AGASTYA WALKED AWAY--

THE MOTHER OF
MY SON SHALL
BE THE MOST
WORTHY OF
WOMEN.

AGASTYA SEARCHED LONG AND HARD IN ALL THE THREE
WORLDS, BUT COULD NOT FIND THE IDEAL WOMAN.



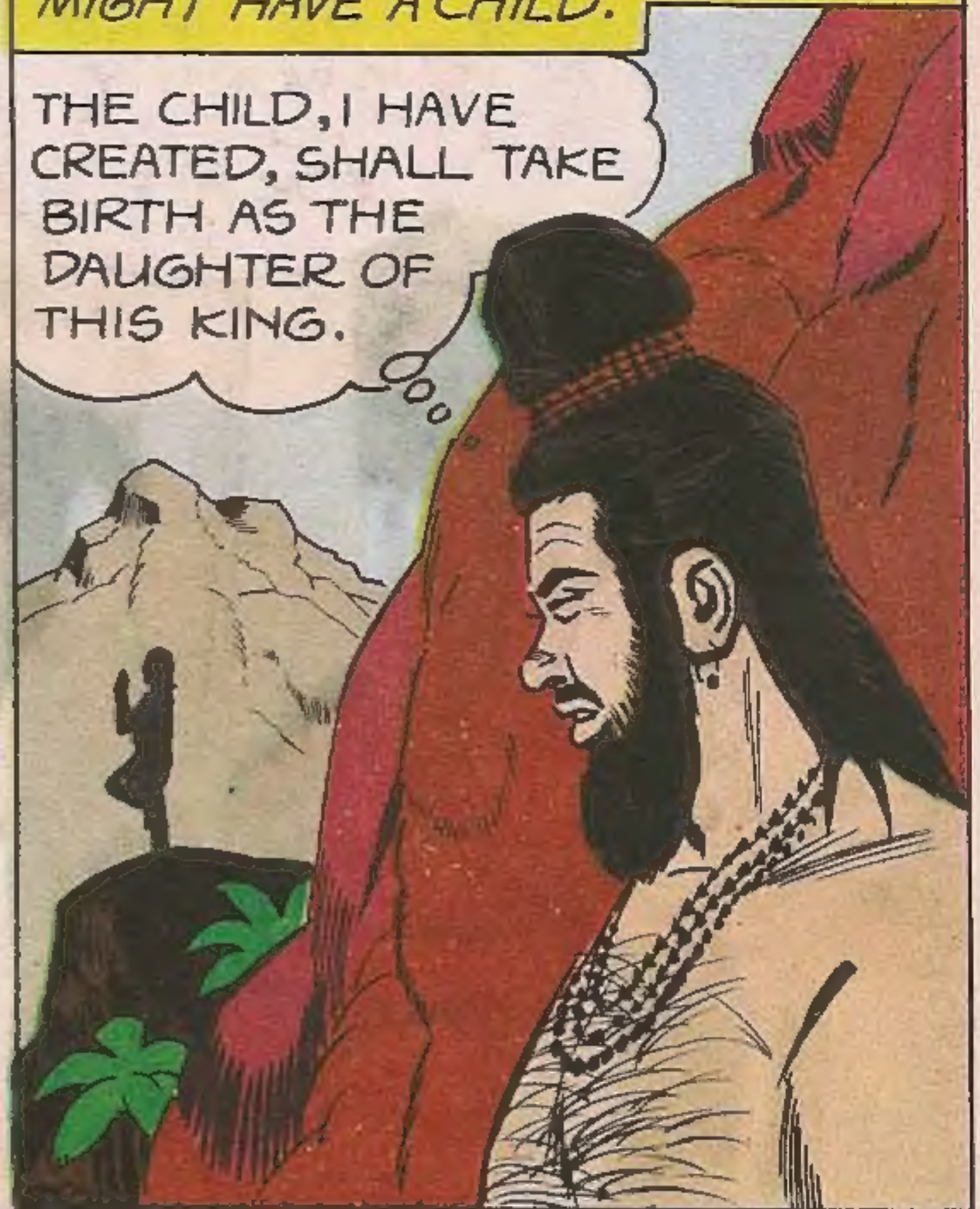
I SHALL
HAVE TO
CREATE HER
TAKING IN ALL
THAT IS MOST
BEAUTIFUL.

AND SO DID AGASTYA CREATE A BEAUTIFUL BABY.



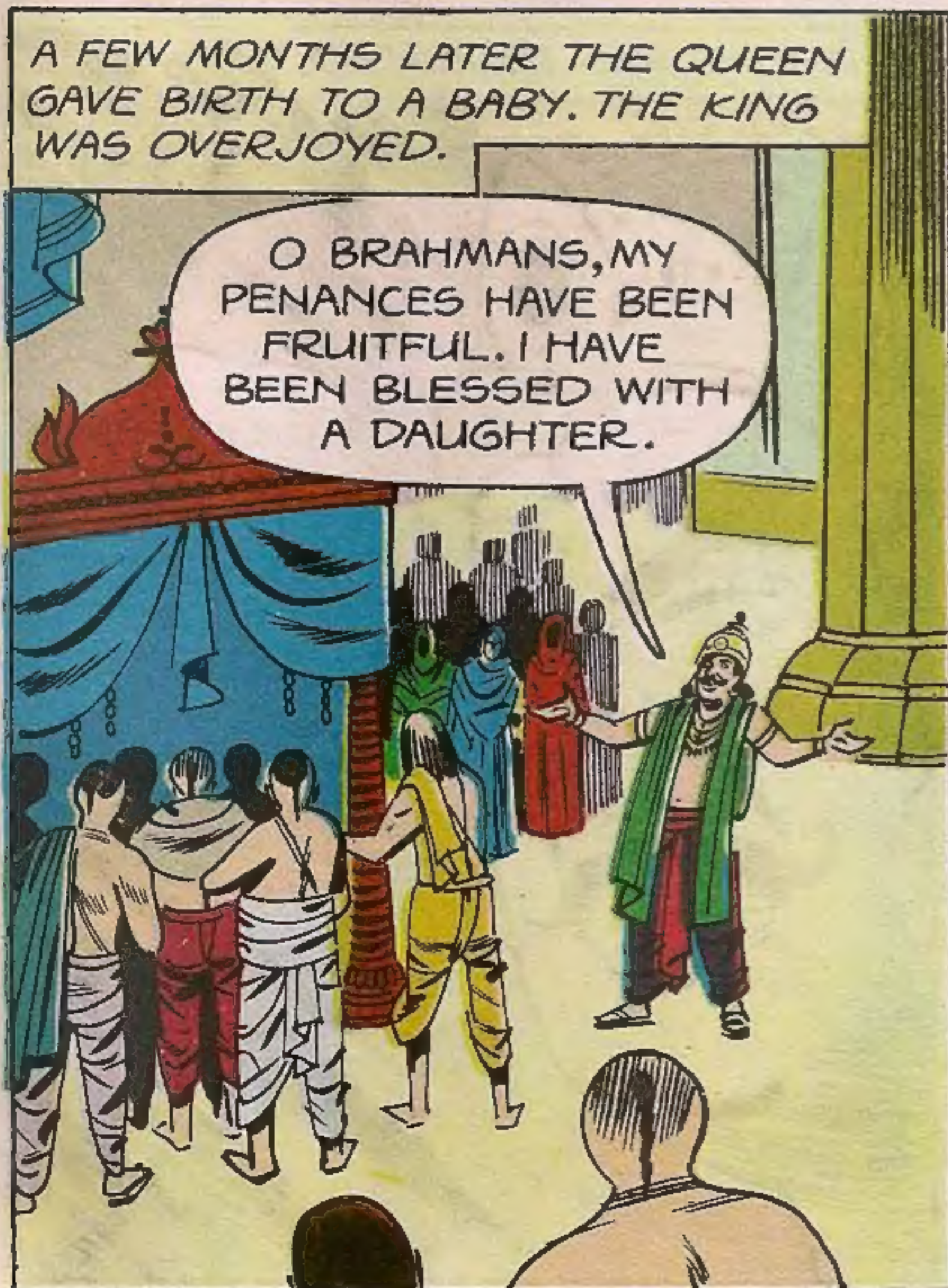
AT THAT TIME THE KING OF VIDARBHA WAS PERFORMING SEVERE PENANCES SO THAT HE MIGHT HAVE A CHILD.

THE CHILD, I HAVE CREATED, SHALL TAKE BIRTH AS THE DAUGHTER OF THIS KING.



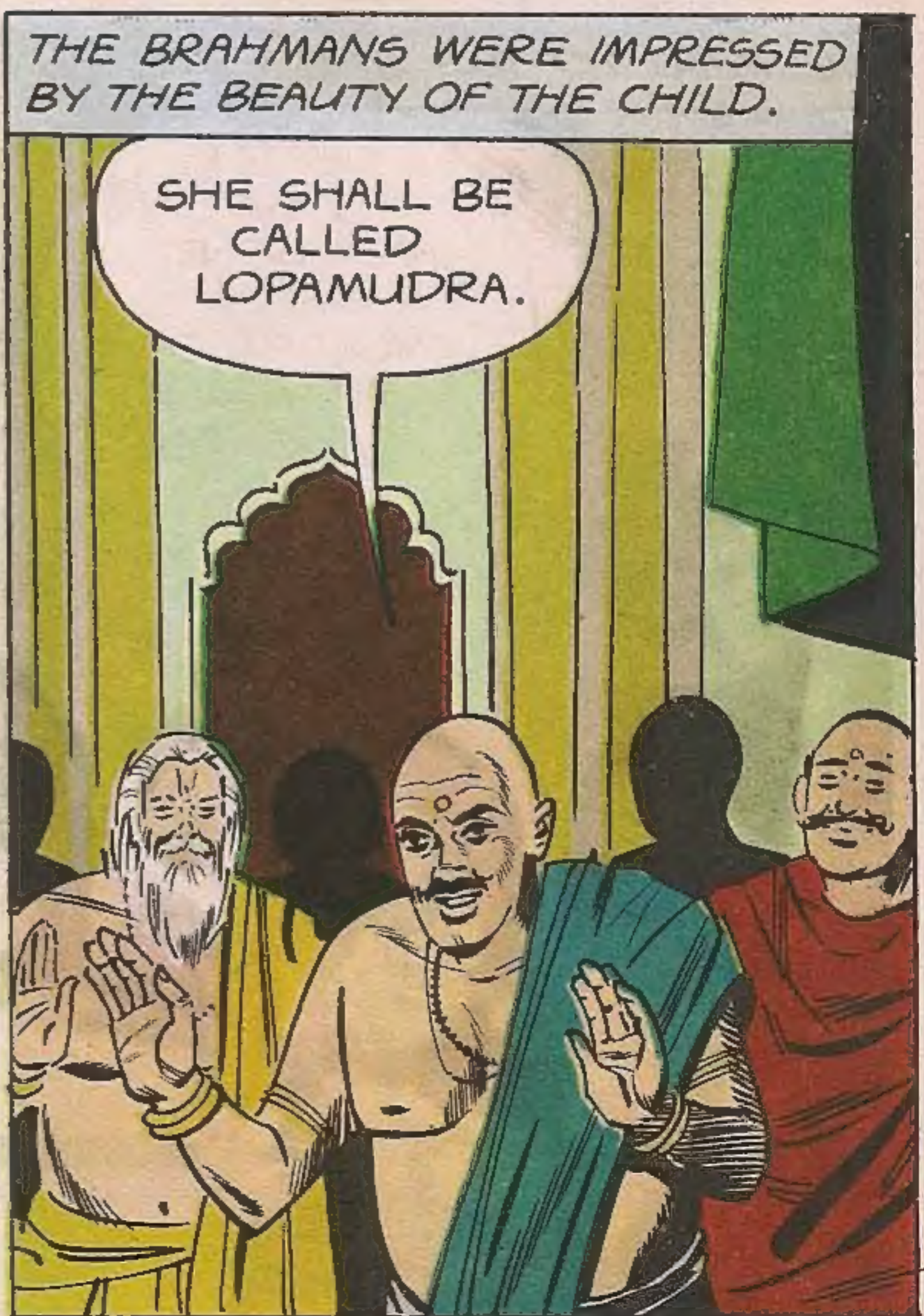
A FEW MONTHS LATER THE QUEEN GAVE BIRTH TO A BABY. THE KING WAS OVERJOYED.

O BRAHMANS, MY PENANCES HAVE BEEN FRUITFUL. I HAVE BEEN BLESSED WITH A DAUGHTER.



THE BRAHMANS WERE IMPRESSED BY THE BEAUTY OF THE CHILD.

SHE SHALL BE CALLED LOPAMUDRA.



LOPAMUDRA GREW UP INTO A BEAUTIFUL AND VIRTUOUS GIRL.

I MUST FIND A WORTHY HUSBAND FOR HER.



MEANWHILE—

LOPAMUDRA MUST NOW BE READY FOR MARRIAGE. I SHALL GO TO HER FATHER AND ASK FOR HER HAND.



HE WENT TO THE KING.

I WISH TO MARRY AND BEGET A SON. WILL YOU GIVE ME YOUR DAUGHTER?



THE KING WAS TROUBLED.

HOW CAN I? BUT I DARE NOT DISPLEASE AGASTYA.



JUST THEN LOPAMUDRA
CAME IN.

FATHER,
WHY DO
YOU
HESITATE?
I AM WILLING
TO MARRY
THE GREAT
SAGE.

SO SHALL
IT BE.



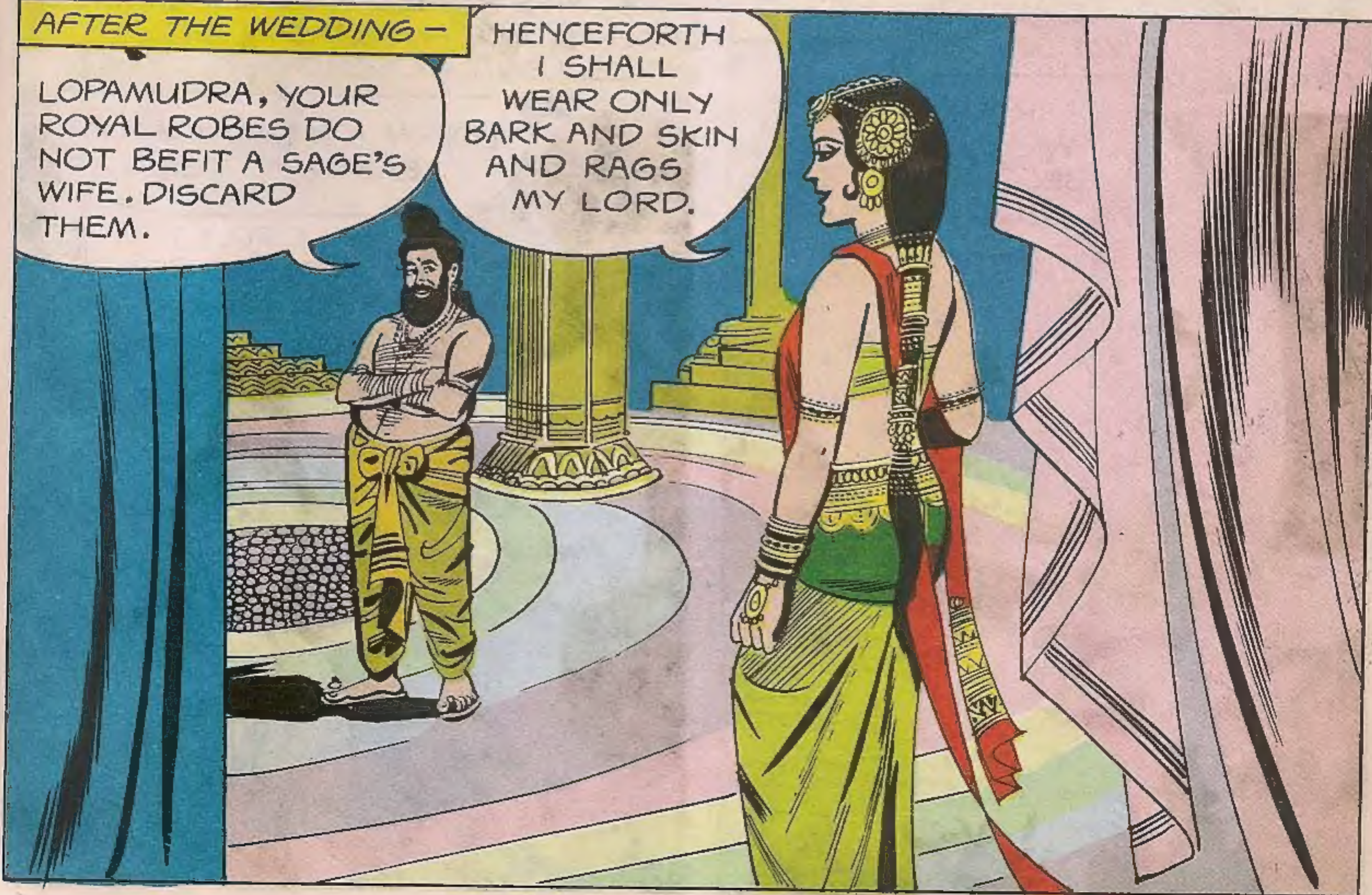
AGASTYA MARRIED
LOPAMUDRA.



AFTER THE WEDDING -

LOPAMUDRA, YOUR
ROYAL ROBES DO
NOT BEFIT A SAGE'S
WIFE. DISCARD
THEM.

HENCEFORTH
I SHALL
WEAR ONLY
BARK AND SKIN
AND RAGS
MY LORD.



LOPAMUDRA CAST OFF HER COSTLY ROBES.

COME, LOPAMUDRA. WE WILL GO TO MY HERMITAGE AT GANGOTRI.

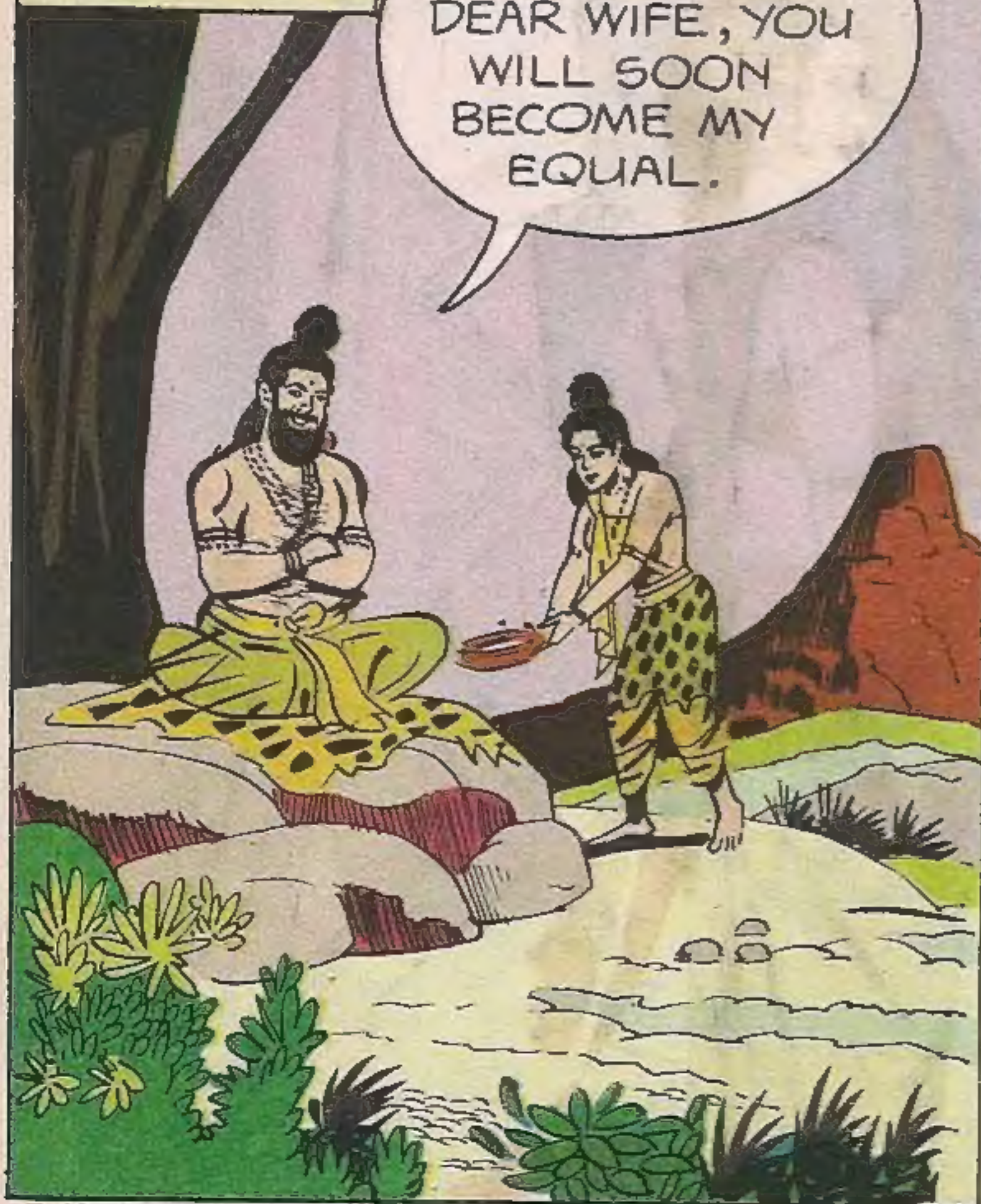


BIDDING FAREWELL TO THE SAD PARENTS, AGASTYA LEFT VIDARBHA WITH HIS WIFE.



AT GANGOTRI, LOPAMUDRA HELPED AGASTYA IN HIS SEVERE PENANCES.

DEAR WIFE, YOU WILL SOON BECOME MY EQUAL.

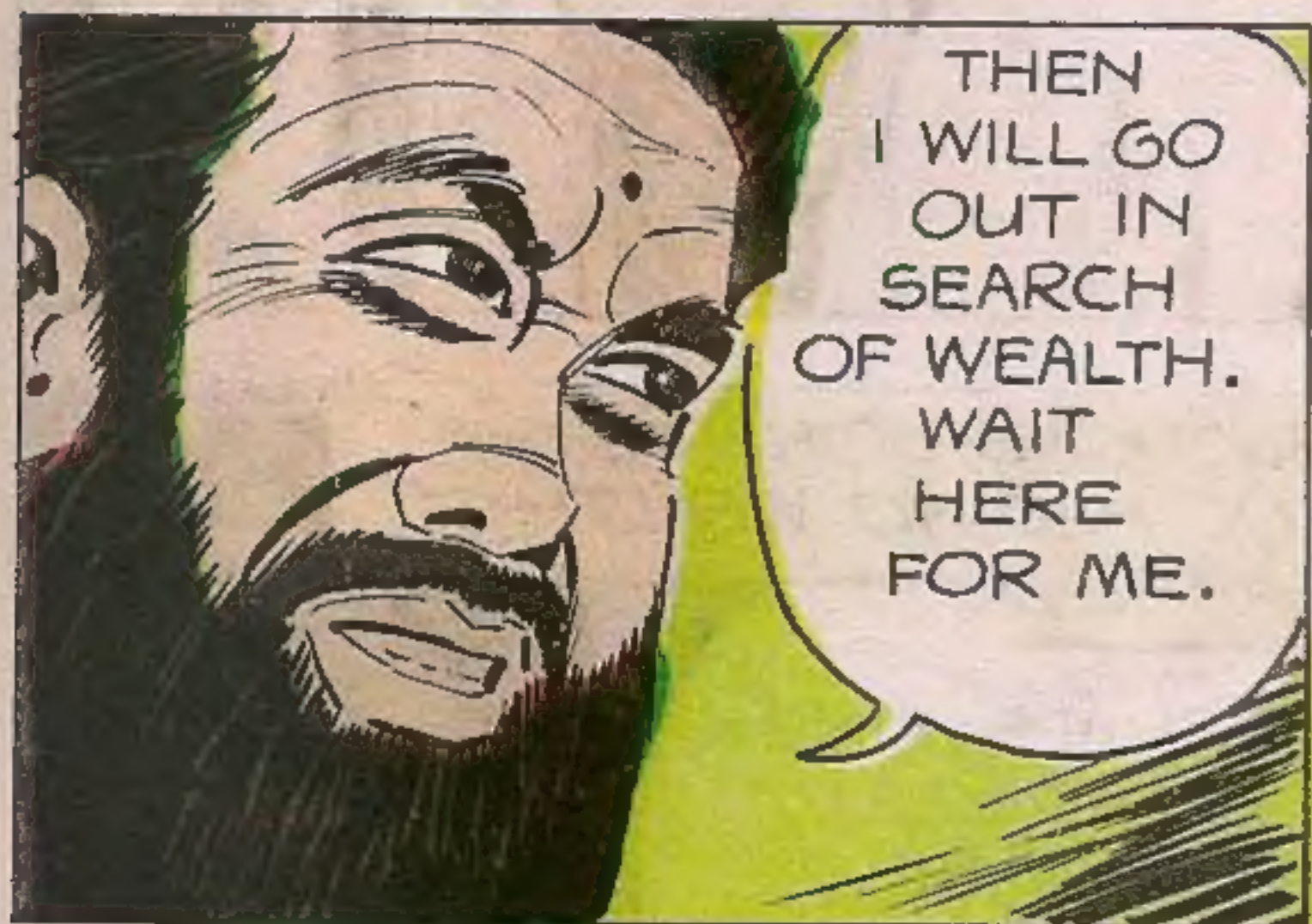
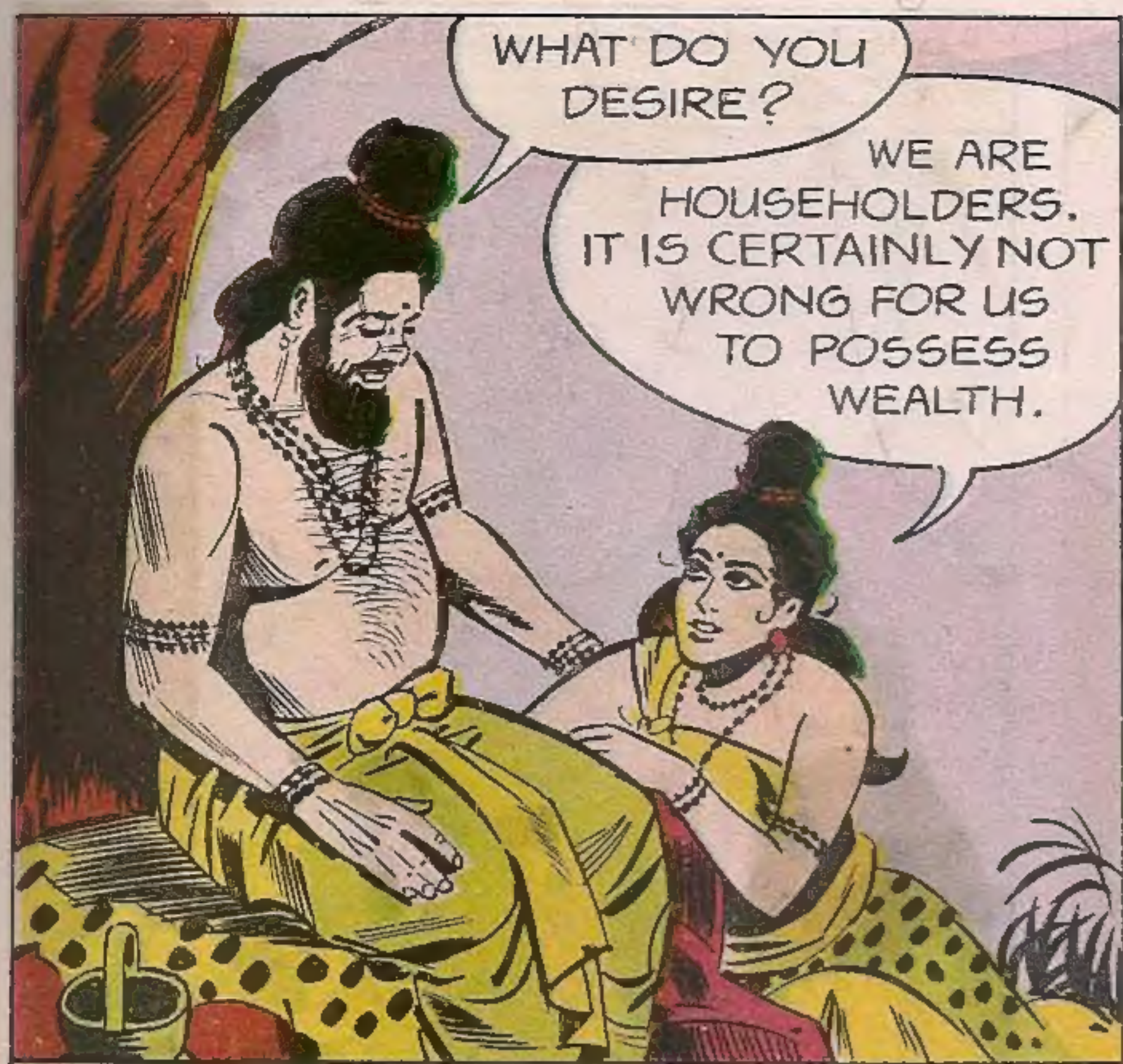


THE DAYS PASSED AND LOPAMUDRA SERVED HER HUSBAND MOST EXCELLENTLY. ONE DAY—

LOPAMUDRA, YOU HAVE PLEASED ME WELL.

MY LORD, I TOO WISH TO BE PLEASED.





SRUTARVA WAS A GENEROUS KING. BUT -

I HAVE NO WEALTH TO SPARE. HOWEVER, YOU MAY TAKE AS MUCH AS YOU WANT FROM WHAT I HAVE.



AGASTYA WAS WISE AND VIRTUOUS.

IF I TAKE ANYTHING FROM THIS KING I WILL BE DEPRIVING OTHERS.



HE TURNED TO SRUTARVA.

I CANNOT TAKE ANYTHING FROM YOU. LET US GO AND SEE IF KING BRIHADASTHA CAN HELP ME.



BUT KING BRIHADASTHA TOO HAD NO WEALTH TO SPARE.

PERHAPS KING TRASADASYU WOULD BE ABLE TO HELP. LET US ALL GO TO HIM.



HOWEVER WHEN THEY
APPROACHED HIM—

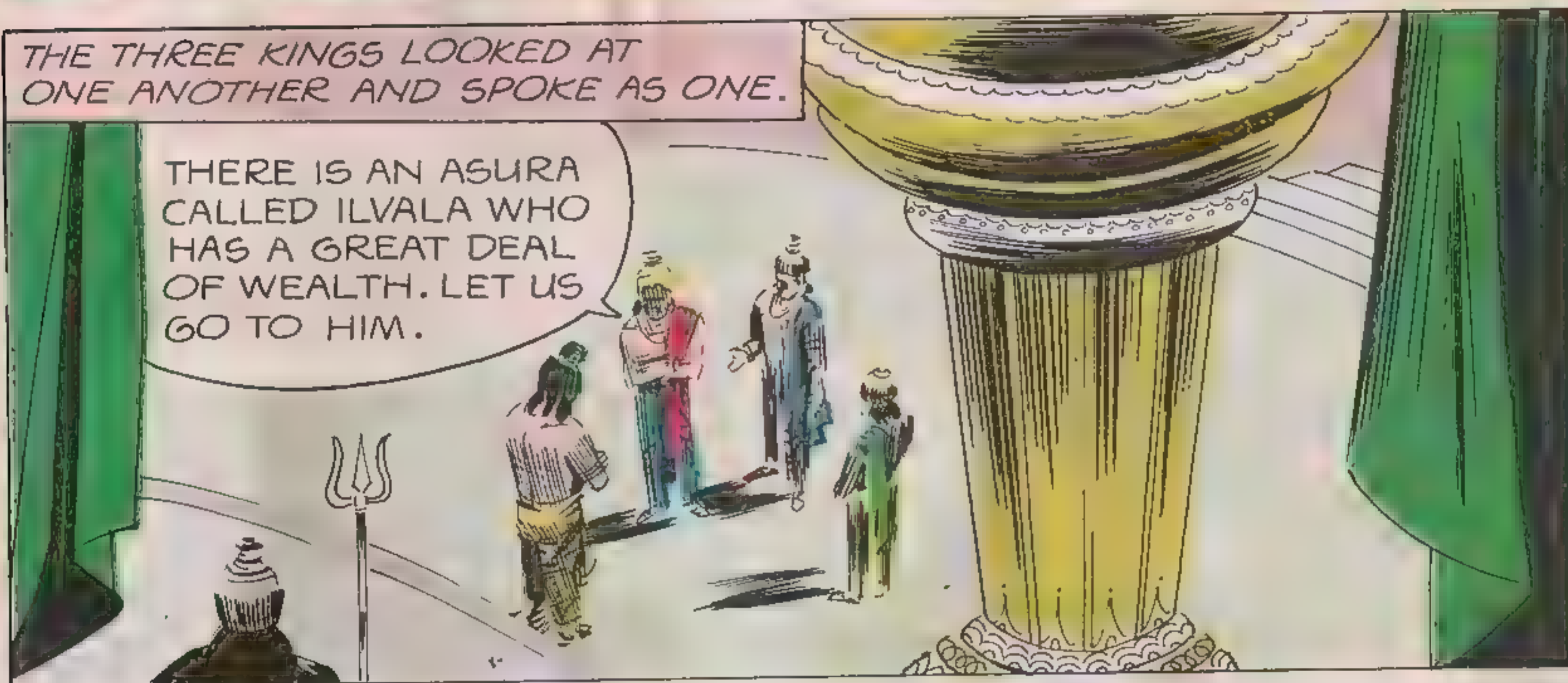
MY REVENUE AND
EXPENDITURE ARE
EQUAL. BUT
I SHALL COME
TO YOUR AID
IF YOU NEED IT.

NO. I DO NOT WANT
TO ACQUIRE WEALTH
BY DEPRIVING
OTHERS.



THE THREE KINGS LOOKED AT
ONE ANOTHER AND SPOKE AS ONE.

THERE IS AN ASURA
CALLED ILVALA WHO
HAS A GREAT DEAL
OF WEALTH. LET US
GO TO HIM.



ILVALA WAS A WICKED ASURA. HE
HAD A BROTHER CALLED VATAPI.
THEY HATED THE BRAHMAN
AND HAD VOWED TO KILL AS
MANY AS THEY COULD.

VATAPI,
I HEAR THAT
THE GREAT
BRAHMAN SAGE,
AGASTYA, IS
COMING HERE
TODAY. GET
READY TO
CHANGE
YOUR FORM.

I'LL BECOME
A GOAT AS USUAL.
YOU WILL KILL
AND COOK ME...



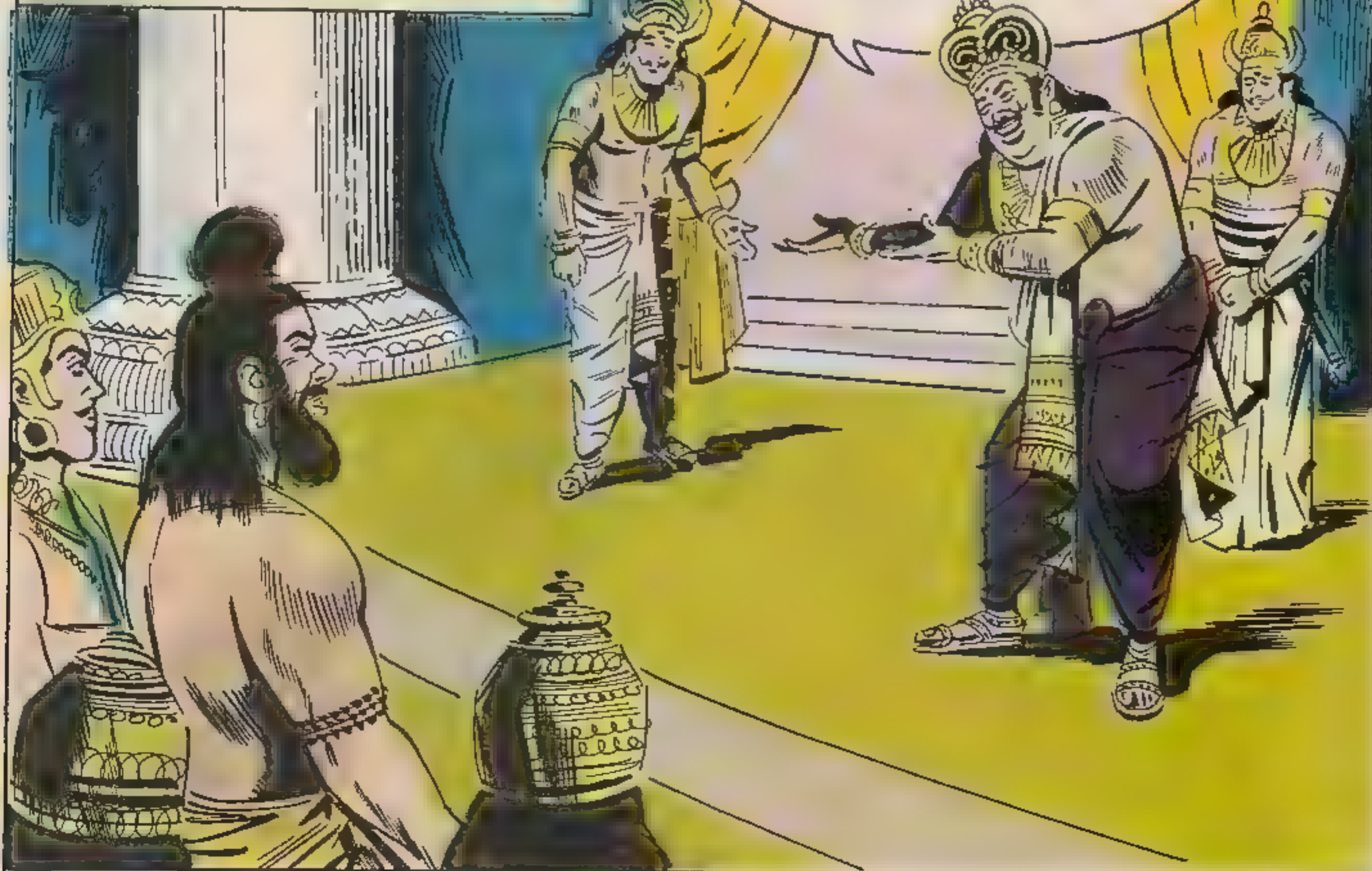
...AND FEED YOU
TO THE BRAHMAN.
THEN WHEN
I CALL YOU...

...I'LL TEAR
HIS STOMACH
AND COME
RUSHING
OUT AND...

...ANOTHER HATED
BRAHMAN, THE
GREATEST OF
THEM ALL, WILL
BE DESTROYED.

WHEN AGASTYA AND THE
THREE KINGS REACHED
ILVALA'S KINGDOM, HE
WAS READY TO
RECEIVE THEM.

WELCOME, O SAGE, AND
YOU, O KINGS. COME,
I HAVE COOKED A
SPECIAL MEAL IN
YOUR HONOUR.



THE THREE KINGS WERE ALARMED.

ALAS! I NEVER THOUGHT
HE WOULD DARE
DO IT TO THE
GREAT SAGE.

WE MUST
WARN
AGASTYA.

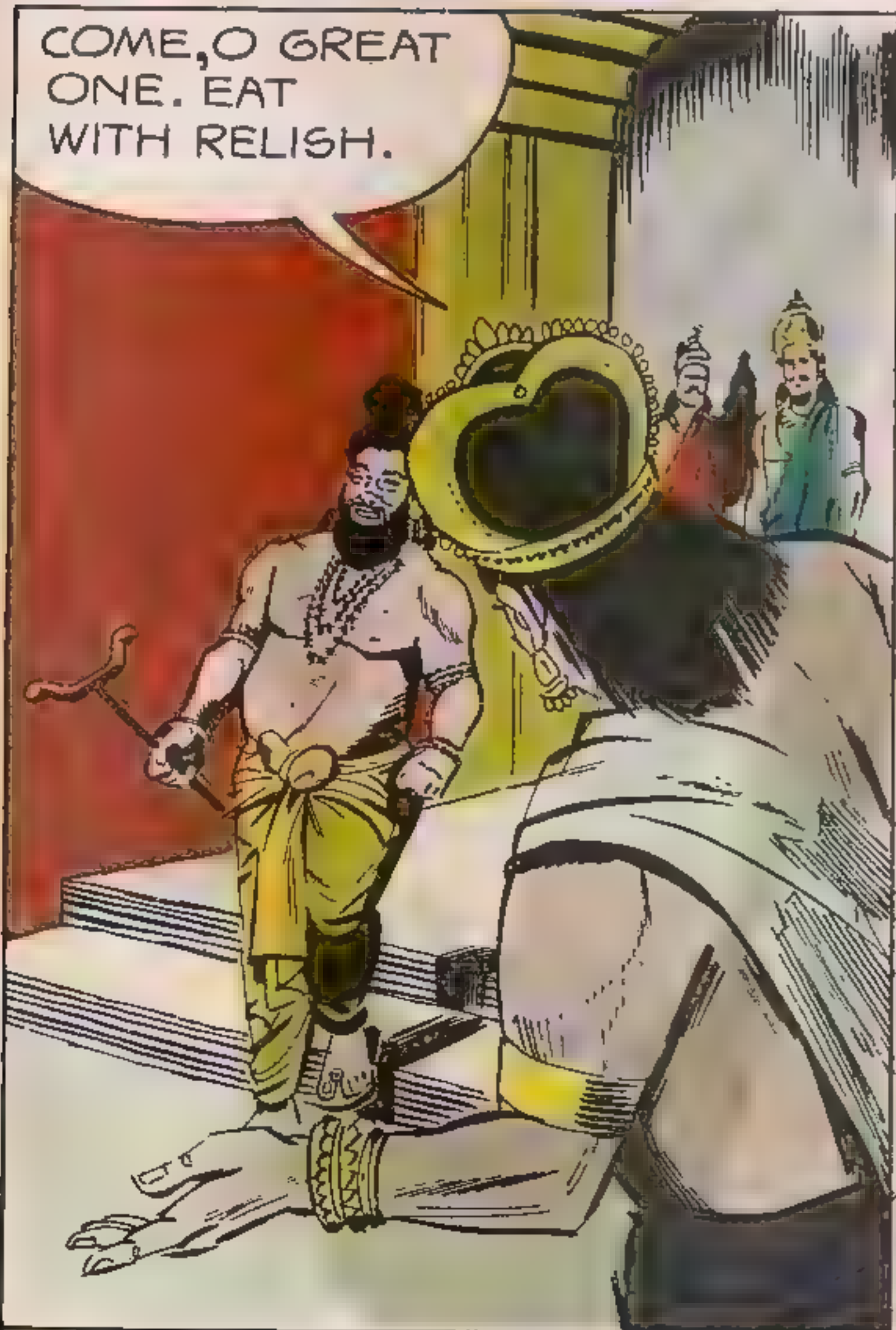


WHEN THEY TOLD AGASTYA—

DO NOT
WORRY.
I WILL
BE SAFE.



COME, O GREAT
ONE. EAT
WITH RELISH.



AGASTYA BEGAN EATING.

HM..M.M! THE
TASTIEST MEAL
I HAVE EVER
EATEN!

AND THE
LAST,
YOU HATED
BRAHMAN.



WHEN AGASTYA HAD EATEN THE LAST MORSEL -

VATAPI, O, VATAPI,
COME OUT.



BUT -

BURRRRP



ILVALA BECAME FRANTIC.

VATAPI! O VATAPI! COME
OUT. I, ILVALA, AM
CALLING YOU.

HA! HA!
HA! HA!



HOW CAN HE
COME OUT?
I HAVE
ALREADY
DIGESTED
HIM.



ILVALA
ACCEPTED
HIS DEFEAT.

WHY HAVE
YOU COME
HERE?
WHAT
CAN I DO
FOR YOU?

WE KNOW
THAT
YOU ARE
WEALTHY.

THESE KINGS
AND I NEED
WEALTH. GIVE
US WHAT YOU
CAN WITHOUT
DEPRIVING
ANY OTHER.

ILVALA WAS QUIET
FOR A MOMENT.

I SHALL GIVE
THE KINGS
10,000 COWS
EACH AND AS
MANY GOLD
COINS; TO
AGASTYA - 20,000
COWS AND AS
MANY GOLD COINS.
I WILL ALSO GIVE
HIM MY GOLDEN
CHARIOT, AND
HORSES.

THEN HE TURNED TO AGASTYA.

IF YOU CAN
GUESS WHAT
I INTEND TO
GIVE YOU,
THAT WILL
BE YOURS.



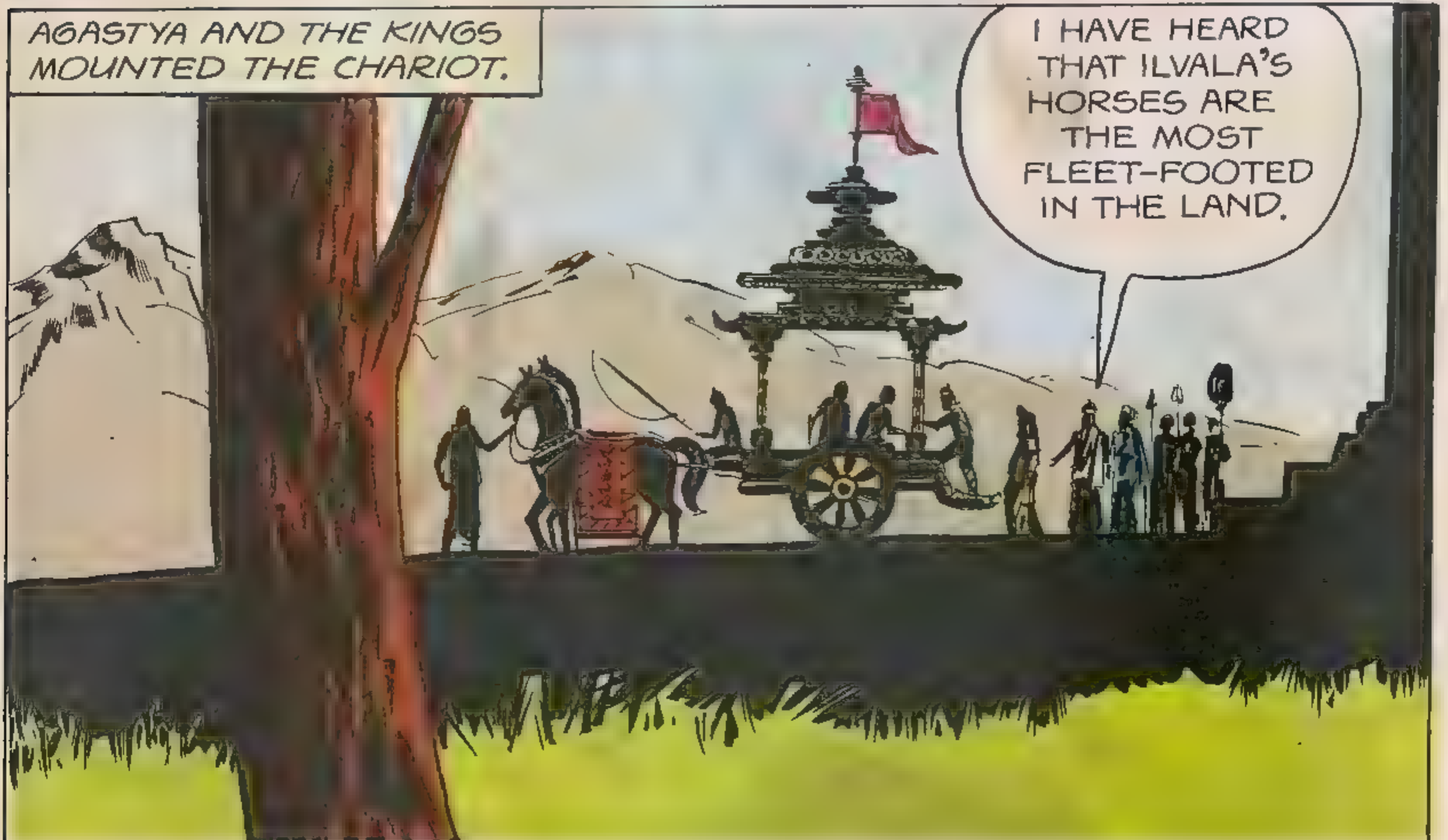
AGASTYA WITH HIS SPIRITUAL
INSIGHT EASILY KNEW WHAT
ILVALA HAD IN MIND.

YOU INTEND TO GIVE THE KINGS
10,000 COWS EACH AND AS
MANY GOLD COINS. AND TO ME,
20,000 COWS, AS MANY COINS,
AND YOUR GOLDEN CHARIOT
AND HORSES.



YOU HAVE
WON THEM
ALL. TAKE THEM.

AGASTYA AND THE KINGS
MOUNTED THE CHARIOT.



I HAVE HEARD
THAT ILVALA'S
HORSES ARE
THE MOST
FLEET-FOOTED
IN THE LAND.

THE KING WAS RIGHT. IN NO TIME, THEY REACHED AGASTYA'S HERMITAGE.

MAY WE RETURN TO
OUR RESPECTIVE
CITIES?

YES. OUR
WORK IS
OVER.
YOU MAY
GO.



WHEN THEY LEFT, AGASTYA
WENT TO LOPAMUDRA.

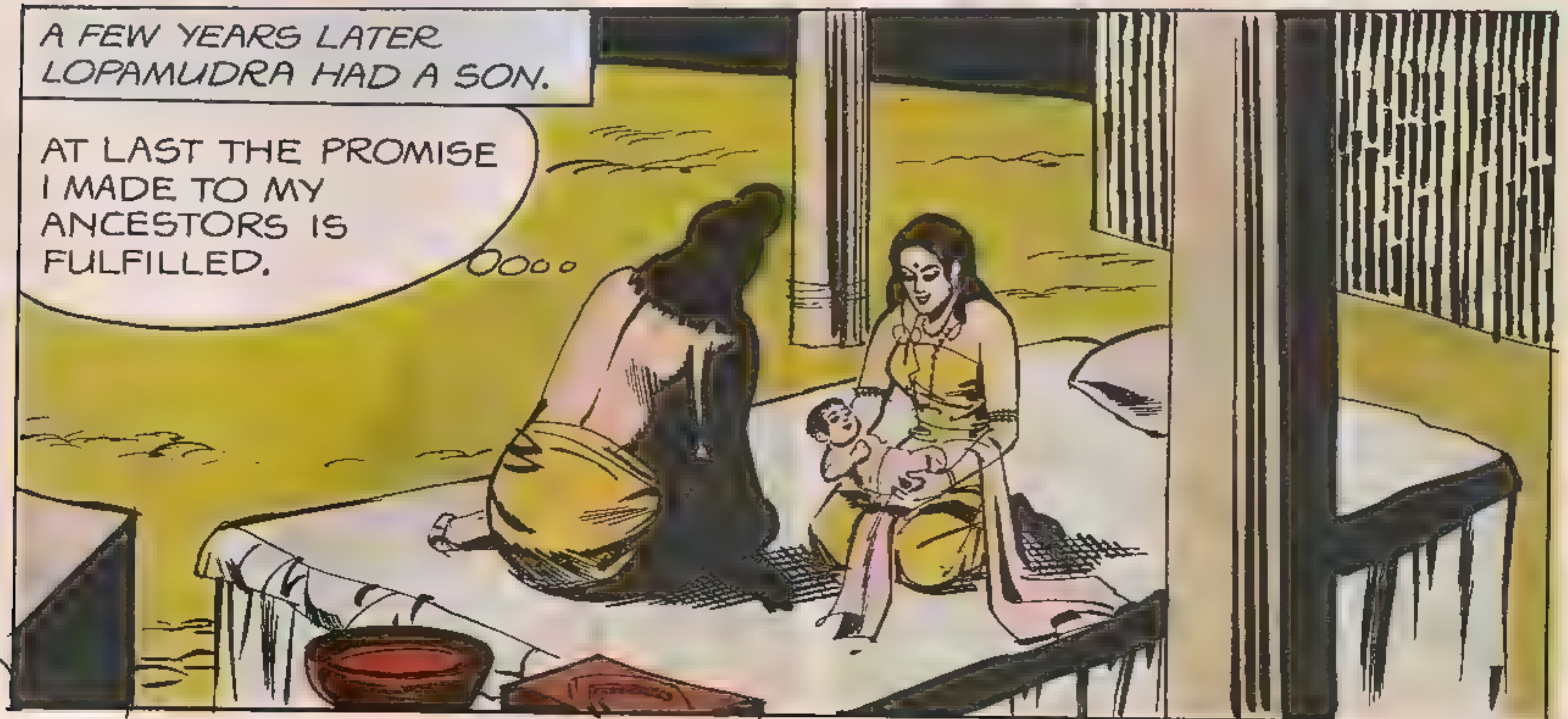
I HAVE BROUGHT WHAT
YOU WANTED,
LOPAMUDRA.
WE WILL NOW
LIVE AS YOU
WISH.

I AM GRATEFUL
TO YOU, MY
LORD.

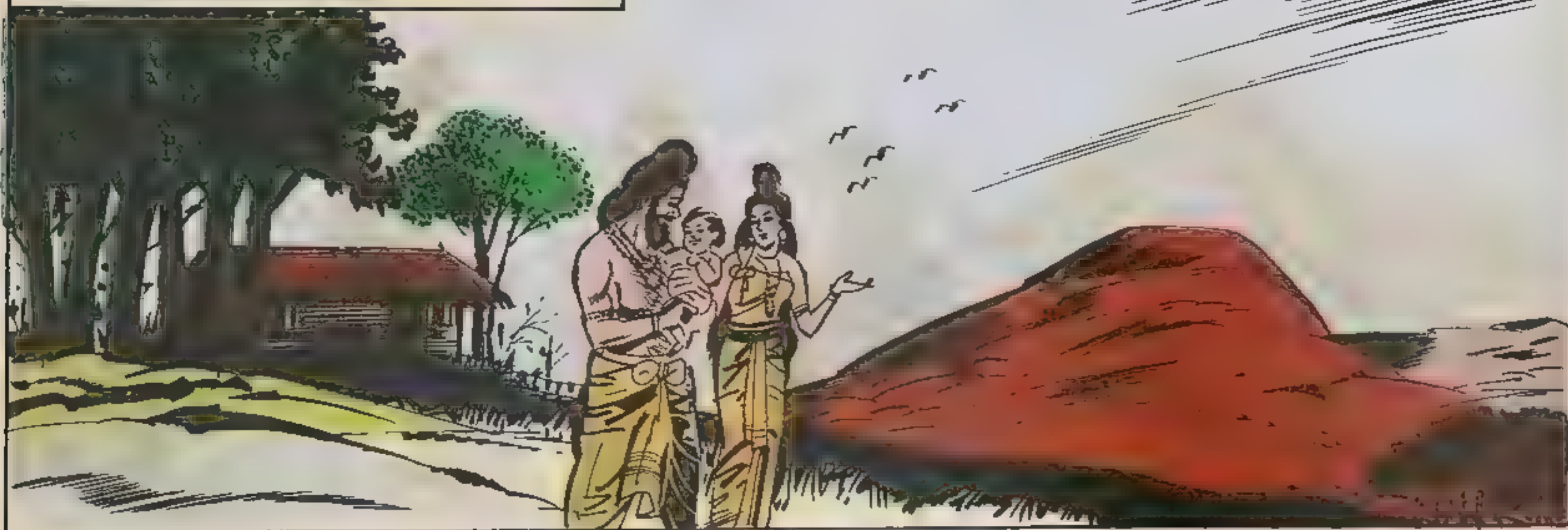


A FEW YEARS LATER
LOPAMUDRA HAD A SON.

AT LAST THE PROMISE
I MADE TO MY
ANCESTORS IS
FULFILLED.



ONE DAY, WHILE AGASTYA,
LOPAMUDRA AND THEIR
SON WERE LIVING AT
GANGOTRI...



...THE VINDHYA MOUNTAIN
ADDRESSED THE SUN.

O GLORIOUS SUN,
YOU GO AROUND
MOUNT MERU
EVERY DAY AND
HONOUR HIM.



I TOO WOULD LIKE TO
BE HONoured IN THE
SAME MANNER.

MY PATH HAS
BEEN ASSIGNED TO
ME SINCE
CREATION. I DO NO
SPECIAL HONOUR
TO MERU.

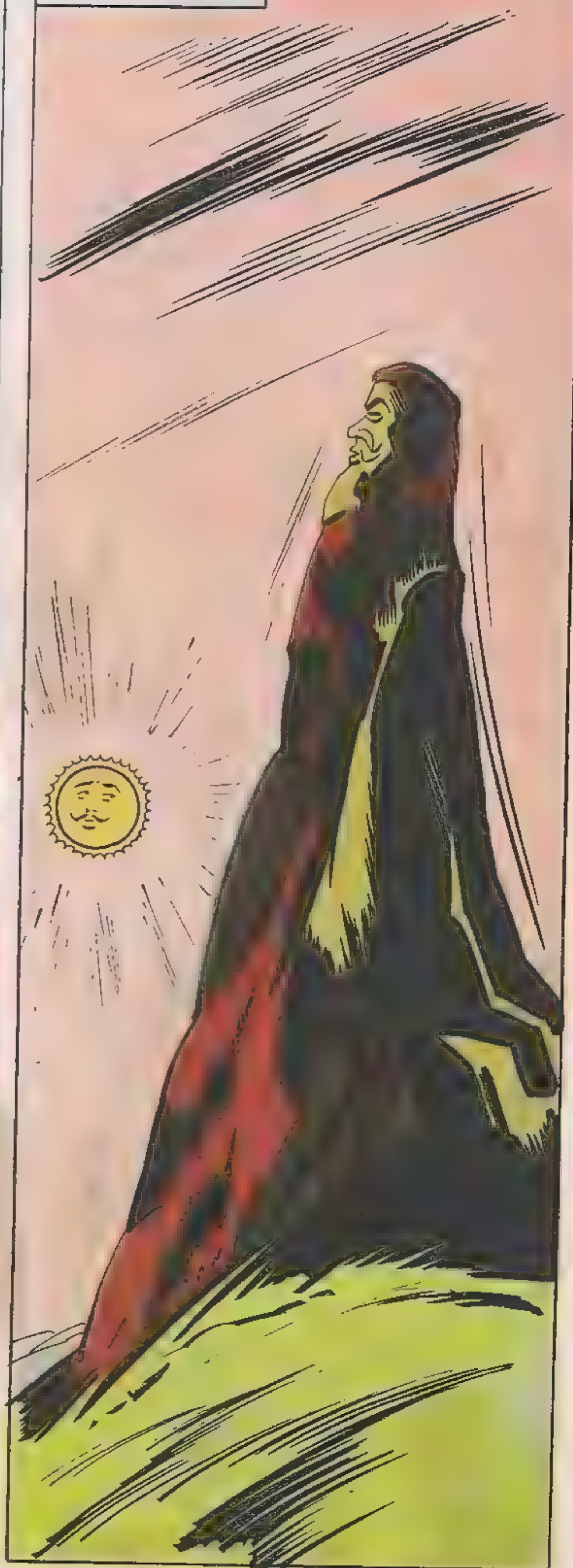


THE SUN'S WORDS ANGERED
THE MOUNTAIN.

THEN I SHALL
GROW TALLER
AND BLOCK
YOUR PATH.



SO THE VINDHYA GREW
AND GREW.



WHEN THE DEVAS SAW THIS
THEY WERE ALARMED.

THIS UNCHECKED
GROWTH OF
VINDHYA WILL
SOON PLUNGE
THE EARTH IN
DARKNESS.

LET US TRY
TO STOP
HIM.



THEY WENT TO THE RAPIDLY
GROWING MOUNTAIN.

PLEASE DESIST
FROM THIS
PURSUIT. YOU
WILL UPSET
THE BALANCE
OF CREATION.

THAT IS
NOT MY
CONCERN.



THE GODS DID NOT KNOW
WHAT TO DO. AT LAST—

LET US
HASTEN TO
AGASTYA. HE
IS THE ONLY
ONE WHO CAN
HELP US.



THE DEVAS WENT TO THE HERMITAGE
OF THE SAGE.

WELCOME TO MY HERMITAGE,
O DEVAS. WHAT CAN
I DO FOR YOU?

O GREAT ONE,
WE NEED
YOUR HELP.



WHEN THEY HAD TOLD HIM EVERYTHING, AGASTYA REASSURED THEM.

DO NOT WORRY. I WILL DO ALL I CAN, GO IN PEACE.



THE GODS LEFT. AGASTYA TURNED TO LOPAMUDRA.

COME, DEAR ONE. LET US GO AND SEE IF WE CAN STOP HIM.

IT IS OUR DUTY, MY LORD.



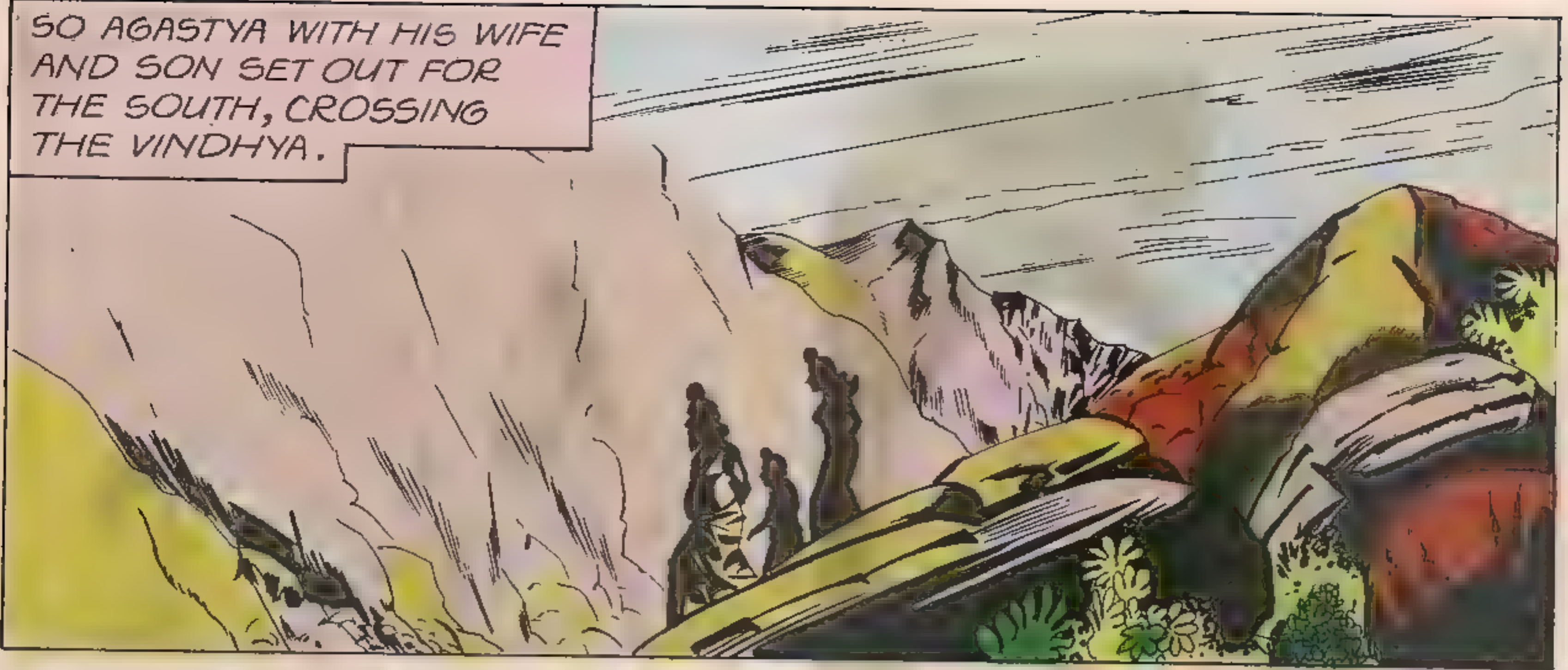
THEY WENT TO THE MOUNTAIN.

O GREAT MOUNTAIN, I WISH TO CROSS OVER YOU TO THE SOUTHERN COUNTRY. WAIT TILL I RETURN.

O GREAT SAGE, I WILL STOP INCREASING MY SIZE TILL YOU RETURN FROM THE SOUTH.

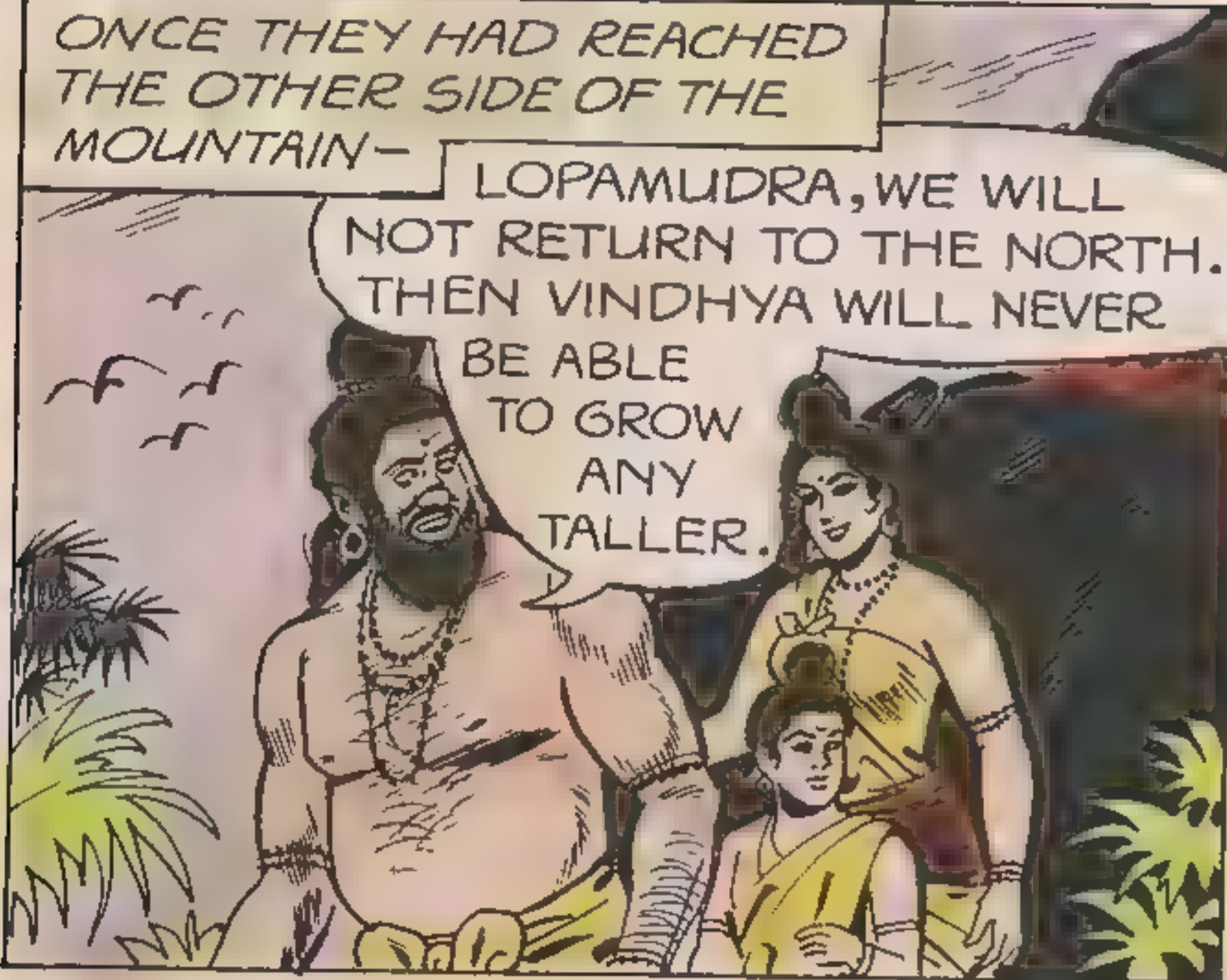


SO AGASTYA WITH HIS WIFE AND SON SET OUT FOR THE SOUTH, CROSSING THE VINDHYA.

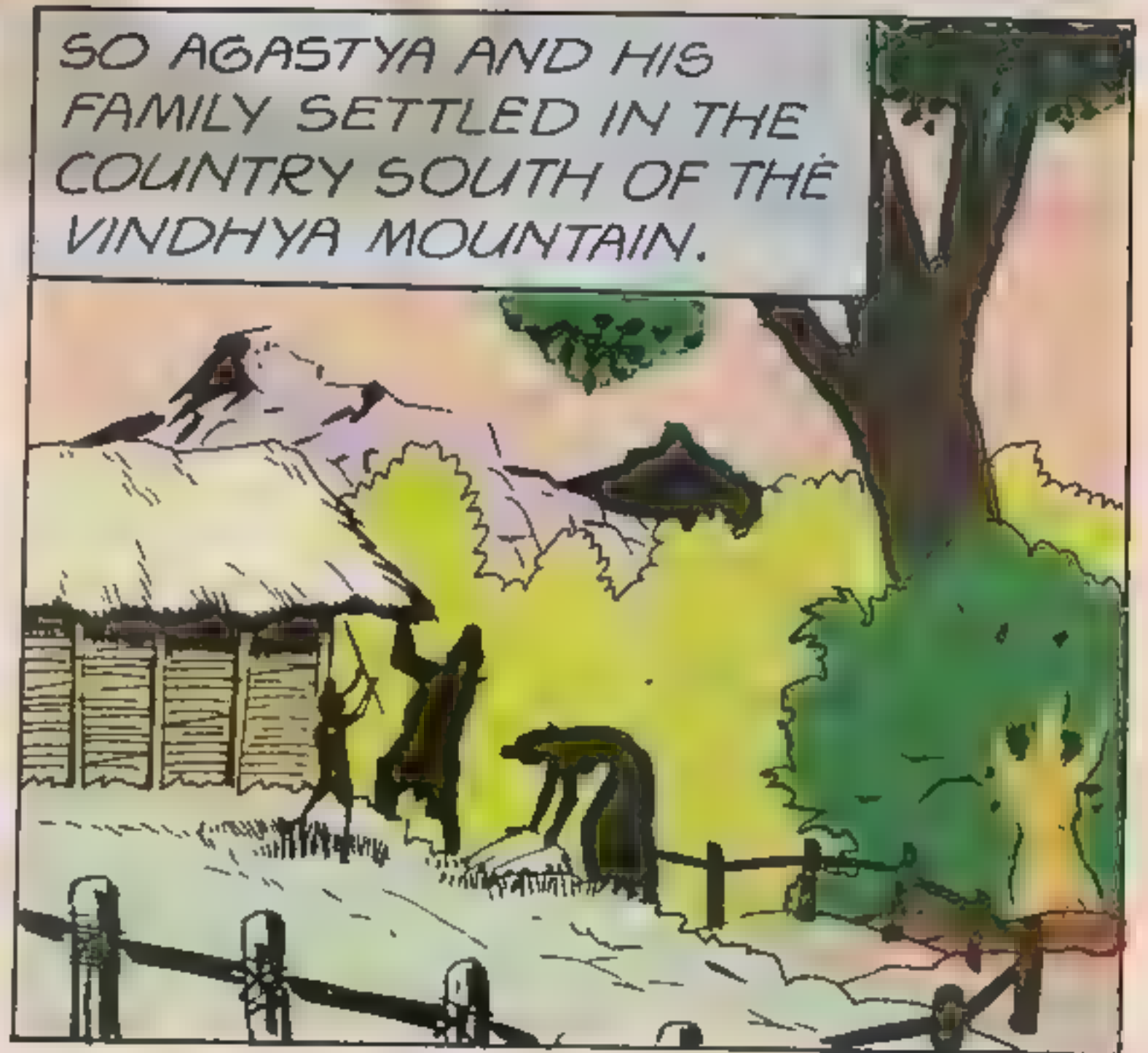


ONCE THEY HAD REACHED THE OTHER SIDE OF THE MOUNTAIN—

LOPAMUDRA, WE WILL NOT RETURN TO THE NORTH. THEN VINDHYA WILL NEVER BE ABLE TO GROW ANY TALLER.



SO AGASTYA AND HIS FAMILY SETTLED IN THE COUNTRY SOUTH OF THE VINDHYA MOUNTAIN.



THE KALKEYAS, A GROUP OF ASURAS, WERE BECOMING A NUISANCE TO THE THREE WORLDS. THE DEVAS WERE IN TROUBLE.

THE KALKEYAS ARE NOW ATTACKING OUR CITIES.

THEY DARE TO BECAUSE VRITRA LEADS THEM.

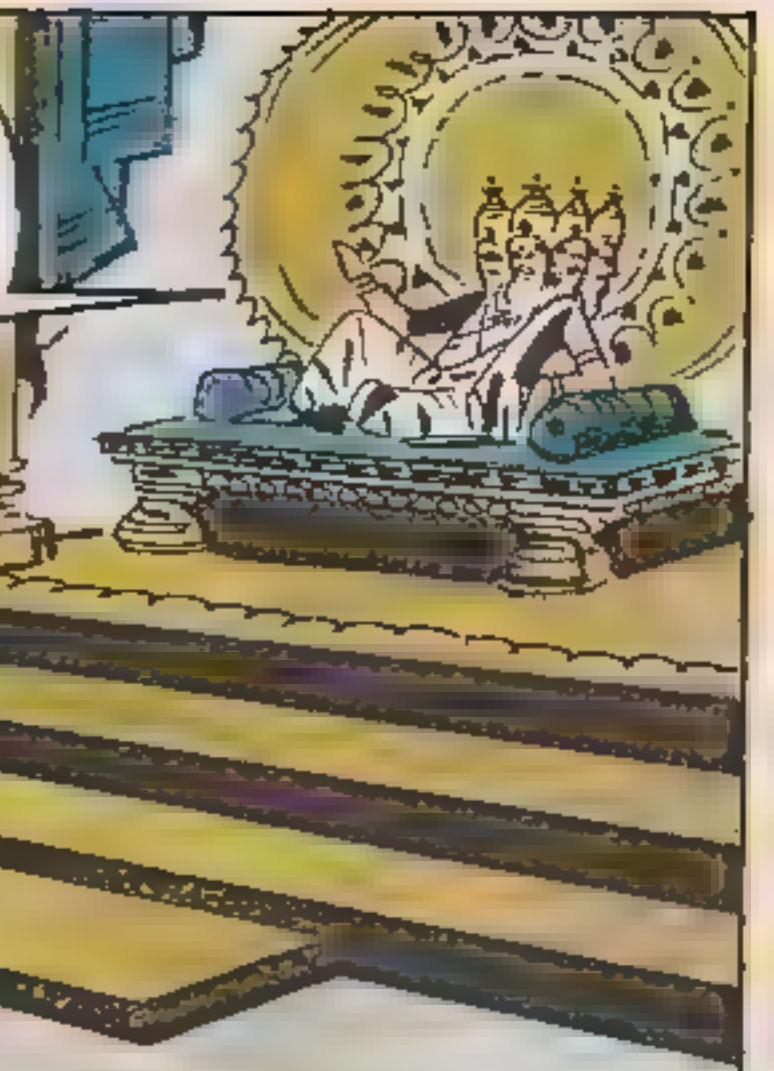
HE MUST BE DESTROYED.

LET US APPROACH BRAHMA FOR HELP.



SO THE DEVAS LED BY INDRA, THEIR KING, WENT TO BRAHMA. BRAHMA KNEW WHY THEY HAD COME.

GO TO THE GREAT SAGE DADHICHI AND ASK HIM FOR HIS BONES. TAKE THE BONES TO TWASHTRI AND ASK HIM TO MAKE A WEAPON FOR YOU WITH THEM.



WITH THAT WEAPON YOU, INDRA, WILL KILL VRITRA.



THE DEVAS GOT THE BONES FROM DADHICHI AND WENT TO TWASHTRI.

I WILL MAKE THE WEAPON VAJRA FOR YOU.



WHEN HE FINISHED HE TURNED TO INDRA.

TAKE THIS AND DESTROY THE ENEMY.



CONFIDENT OF VICTORY, INDRA
AND THE DEVAS ATTACKED
VRITRA AND THE KALKEYAS.



BUT BEFORE THEY COULD ADVANCE,
THE KALKEYAS RUSHED AT THEM
WITH THEIR MACES.



NOT EXPECTING THIS
THE DEVAS BROKE
THEIR RANKS...



...AND FLED IN PANIC.



INDRA LOST
HEART.

WHAT SHALL
I DO? IN
SPITE OF
BRAHMA'S
PROMISE THE
DEVAS HAVE
DESERTED ME.



HE TURNED TO VISHNU FOR HELP.

DO NOT FEAR.
I SHALL GIVE
YOU A PORTION
OF MY MIGHT.

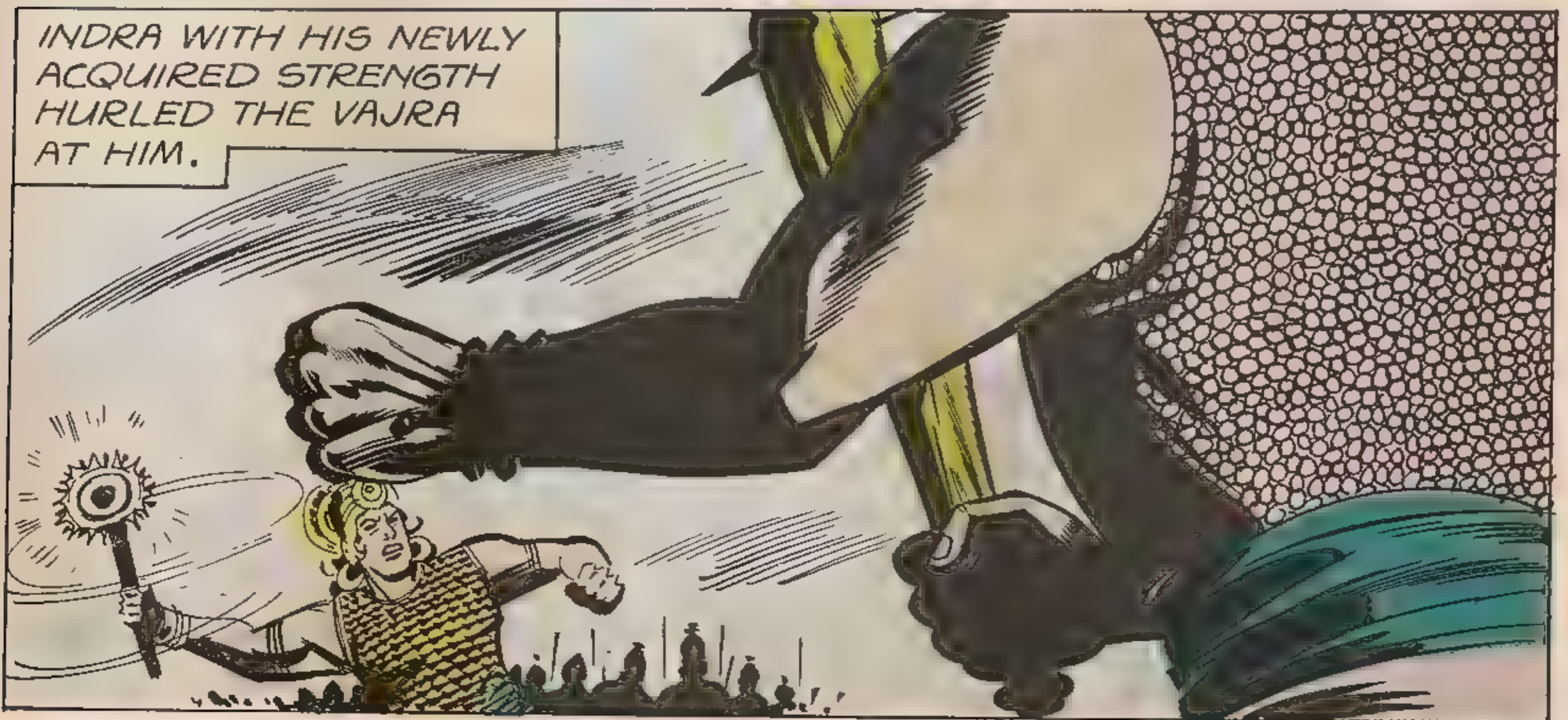


WHEN VRITRA LEARNT OF
THE HELP OBTAINED BY
INDRA, HE ROARED
IN ANGER.

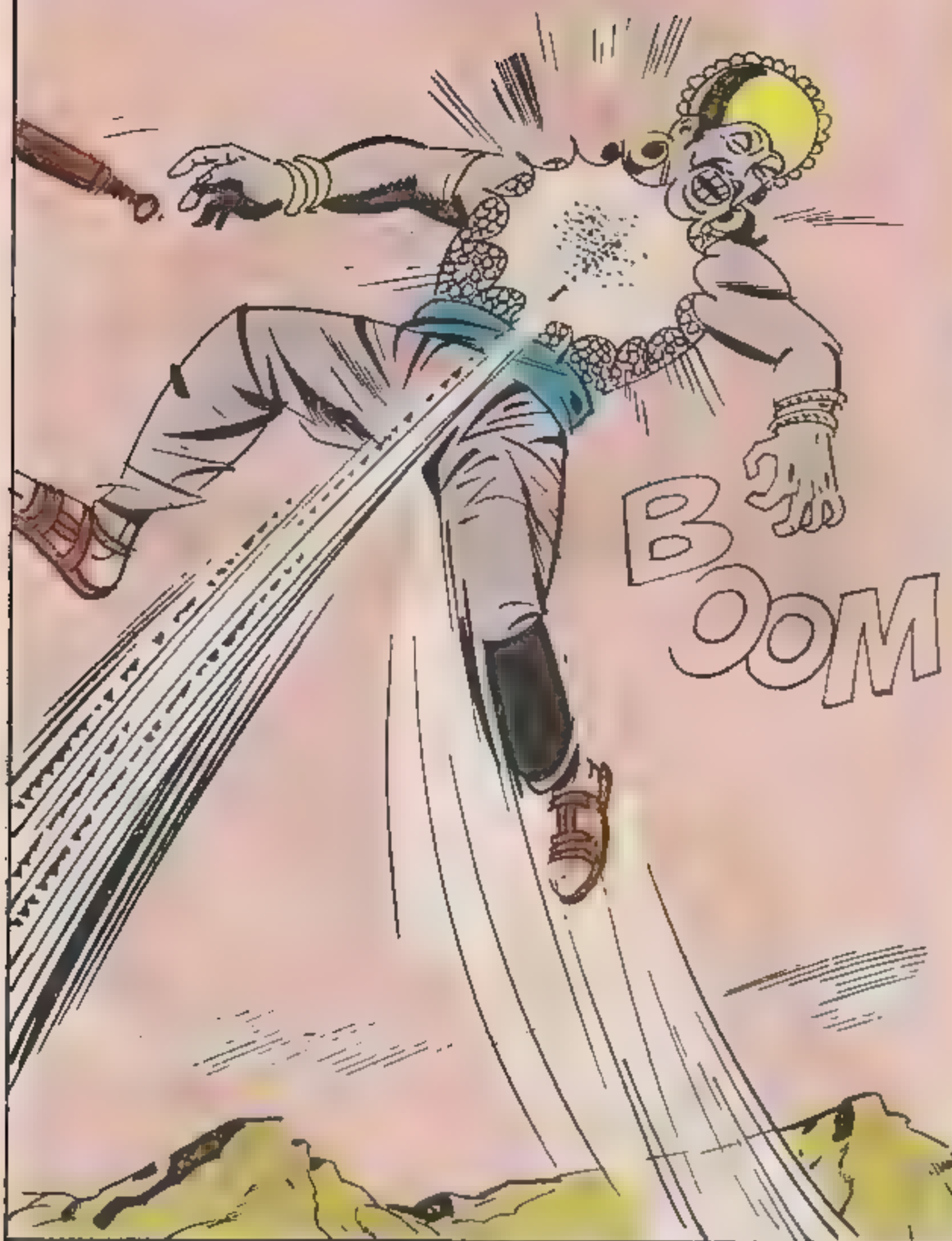
COME, O LEADER
OF THE DEVAS.
TASTE OF MY
MIGHT TOO!



INDRA WITH HIS NEWLY
ACQUIRED STRENGTH
HURLED THE VAJRA
AT HIM.



THE VAJRA FOUND ITS MARK.



THE GREAT ASURA FELL DEAD.



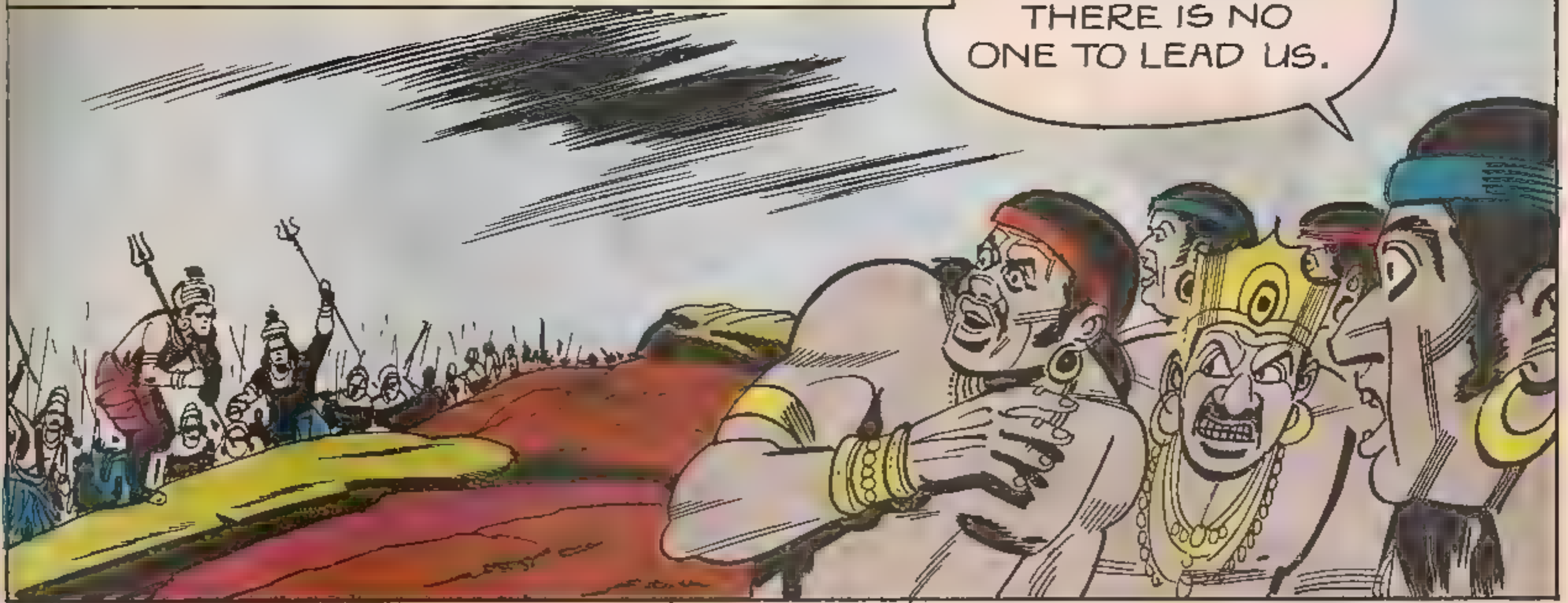
WHEN THE DEVAS
HEARD THE NEWS —

VRITRA IS DEAD.
NOW WE CAN
VANQUISH THE
KALKEYAS.



THEY CHARGED AT THE HAPLESS ASURAS.

WE ARE DOOMED.
THERE IS NO
ONE TO LEAD US.



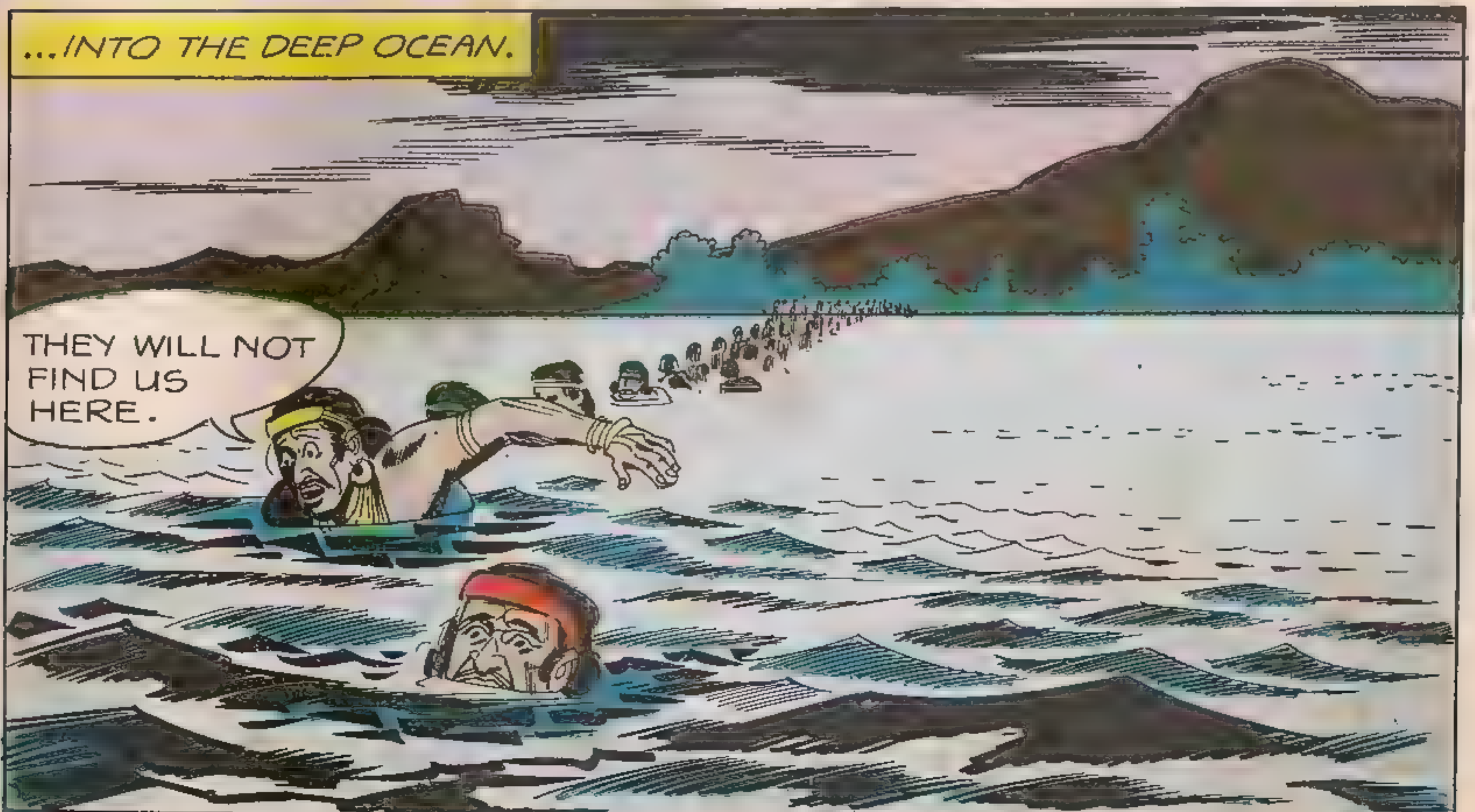
PANIC-
STRICKEN, THE
ASURAS FLED,
AWAY FROM
THE FIELD...

RUN! RUN!



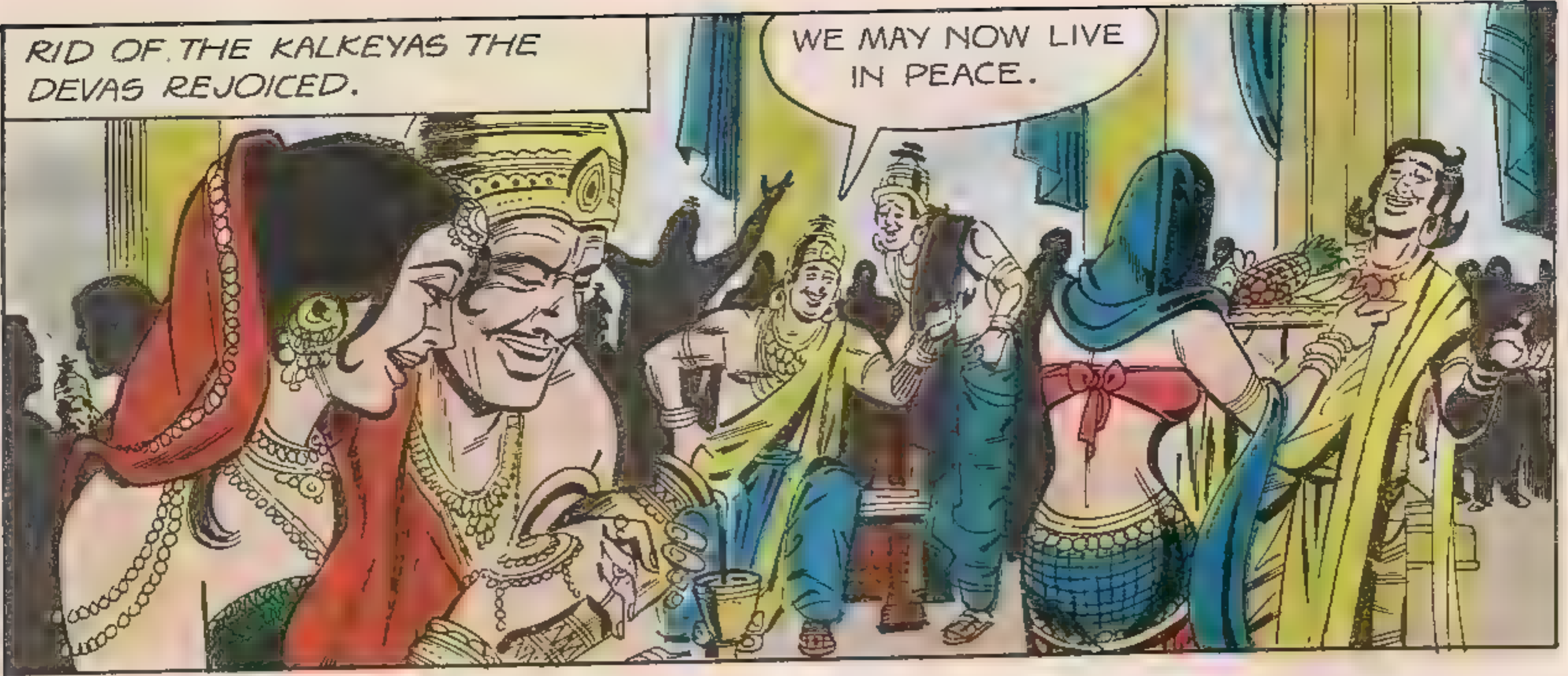
...INTO THE DEEP OCEAN.

THEY WILL NOT
FIND US
HERE.



RID OF THE KALKEYAS THE
DEVAS REJOICED.

WE MAY NOW LIVE
IN PEACE.



MEANWHILE THE
KALKEYAS ASSEMBLED
IN THEIR
UNDERWATER
HOME AND
PLANNED
REVENGE.

WE MUST KILL ALL GOOD
MEN ON EARTH. THEIR
DEATH WILL DESTROY
THE WHOLE UNIVERSE.

WE MUST DO
OUR WORK BY
NIGHT. WE
WILL NOT BE
FOUND OUT.



AND THE
KALKEYAS BEGAN
THEIR WORK OF
DESTRUCTION.

E.E.E.AH!



WARRIORS AND HEROES WENT IN SEARCH OF THE MURDERERS, BUT COULD NOT FIND THEM.

WHO COULD
THEY BE?
WHERE DO
THEY
VANISH?



WHERE COULD
THEY BE HIDING?
WE HAVE
SEARCHED
EVERYWHERE.



INDRA AND THE DEVAS,
WERE PERTURBED.

LET US GO
TO VISHNU
FOR HELP.

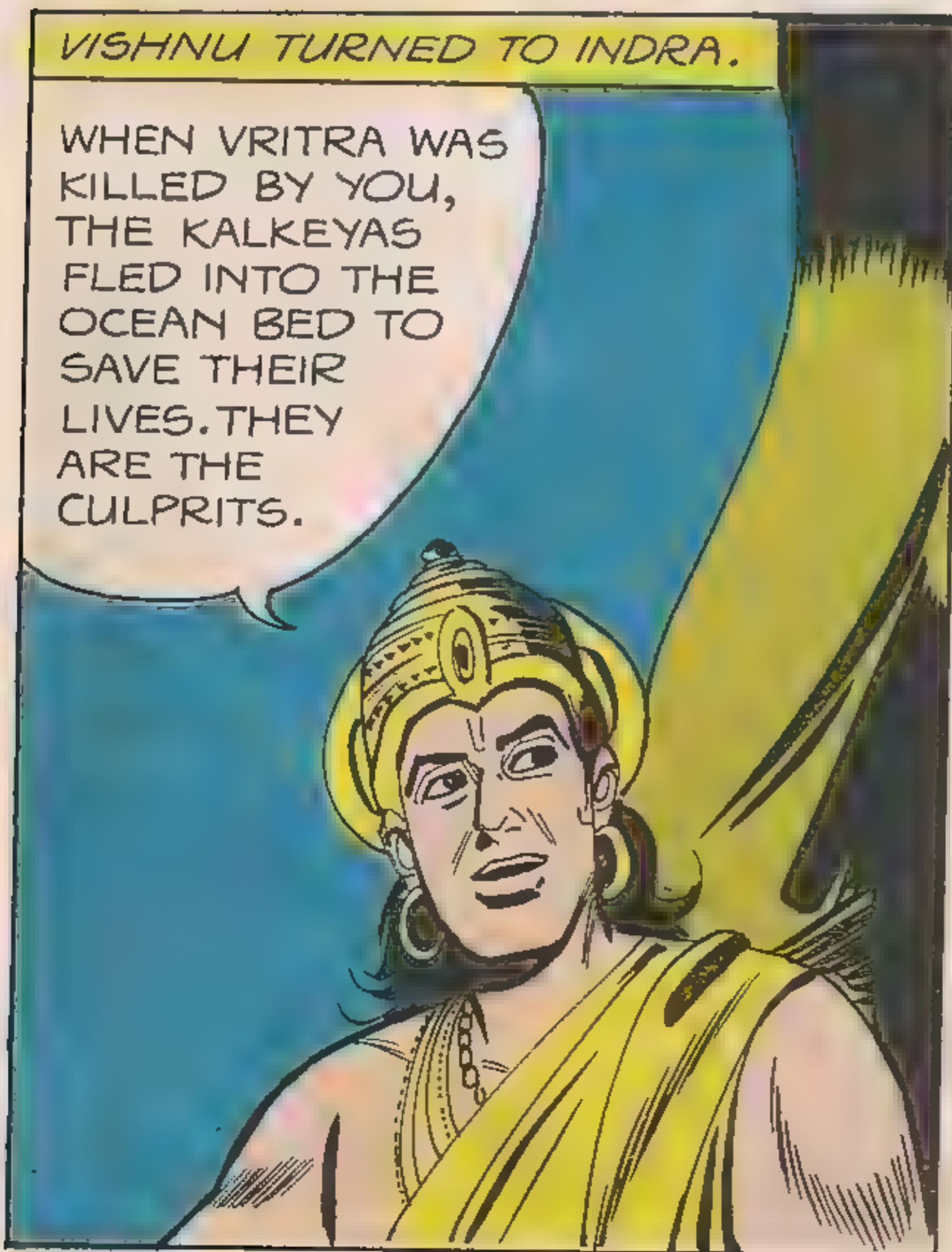


THEY WENT TO HIM.

LORD, YOU HAVE ALWAYS
COME TO OUR AID
WHEN WE
NEEDED
YOU.

WHAT IS
IT NOW?







YOU MUST FIND
OUT SOME MEANS
TO DRY UP
THE OCEAN.

BUT WHO CAN
ACCOMPLISH
SUCH A TASK?



WHO ELSE,
BUT AGASTYA!

THE HOPEFUL DEVAS WENT
TO AGASTYA.

GREAT ONE, YOU
CONSUMED THE
EVIL VATAPI. YOU
PREVENTED VINDHYA
FROM PLUNGING THE
WORLD IN ETERNAL
DARKNESS.

SO WE HAVE
COME TO YOU
FOR HELP.

WHAT DO
YOU WANT
ME TO DO?



WE WANT YOU TO DRINK
THE OCEAN. THEN WE
SHALL BE ABLE TO
KILL OUR ENEMIES,
THE EVIL KALKEYAS.

I SHALL
DO WHAT YOU
DESIRE AS IT
WILL BENEFIT
THE WORLD.

WHEN THEY REACHED
THE OCEAN—

ARRAY YOURSELVES
FOR WAR WHILE
I DRINK THE OCEAN.

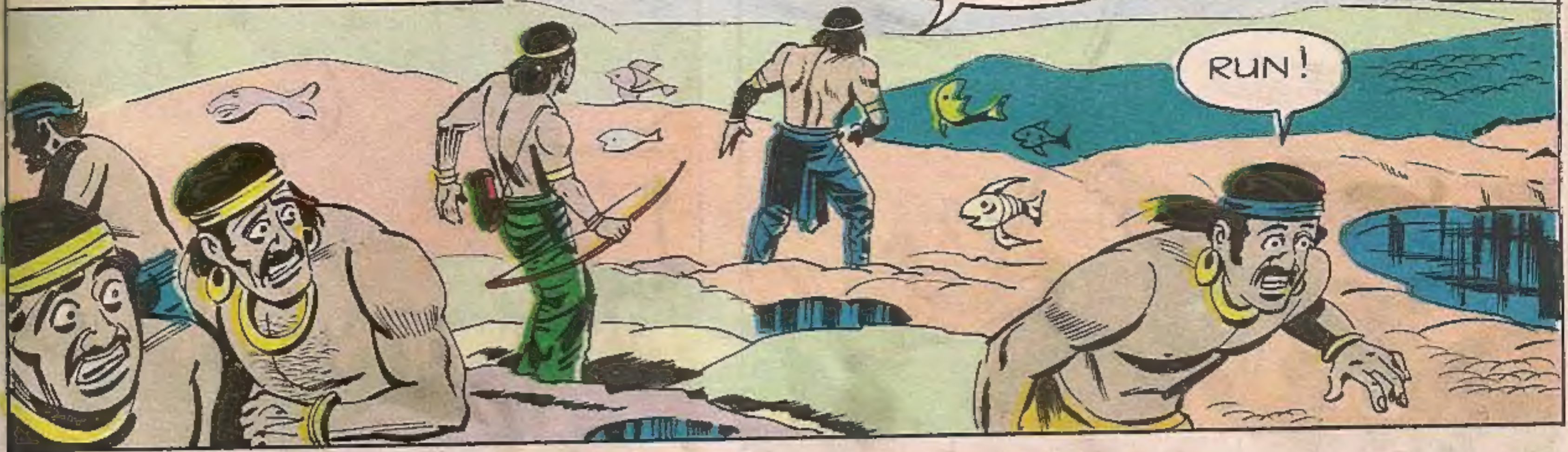
AND AGASTYA
BEGAN
DRINKING
THE OCEAN.

AS THE OCEAN BED BECAME VISIBLE, THE KALKEYAS TAKEN BY SURPRISE RAN HELTER SKELTER.

WH...
WHAT!

WHERE IS ALL
THE WATER
GOING?

RUN!



THE DEVAS WERE
WELL PREPARED.

ATTACK! DO NOT
SPARE A SINGLE
ONE OF THEM.



A TERRIBLE
BATTLE ENSUED.



BUT THE KALKEYAS WERE UNABLE TO WITHSTAND THE ONSLAUGHT...



...AND WERE SOON VANQUISHED.



AGASTYA WATCHED WITH HAPPINESS THE VICTORY OF THE DEVAS.

MY TASK IS ACCOMPLISHED. I MAY NOW GO BACK TO MY PENANCES. PEACE BE WITH YOU.



THUS ONCE MORE THE JUST AND WISE SON OF MITRA AND VARUNA SUPPRESSED EVIL AND PROTECTED THE GOOD.

Have you read these recently published
AMAR CHITRA KATHA titles?

RANJIT SINGH

RAM SHASTRI

RANI OF JHANSI

ULOOPI

BAJI RAO

CHAND BIBI

KABIR

SHER SHAH

DRONA

SURYA

URVASHI

ADI SHANKARA

GHATOTKACHA

TULSIDAS

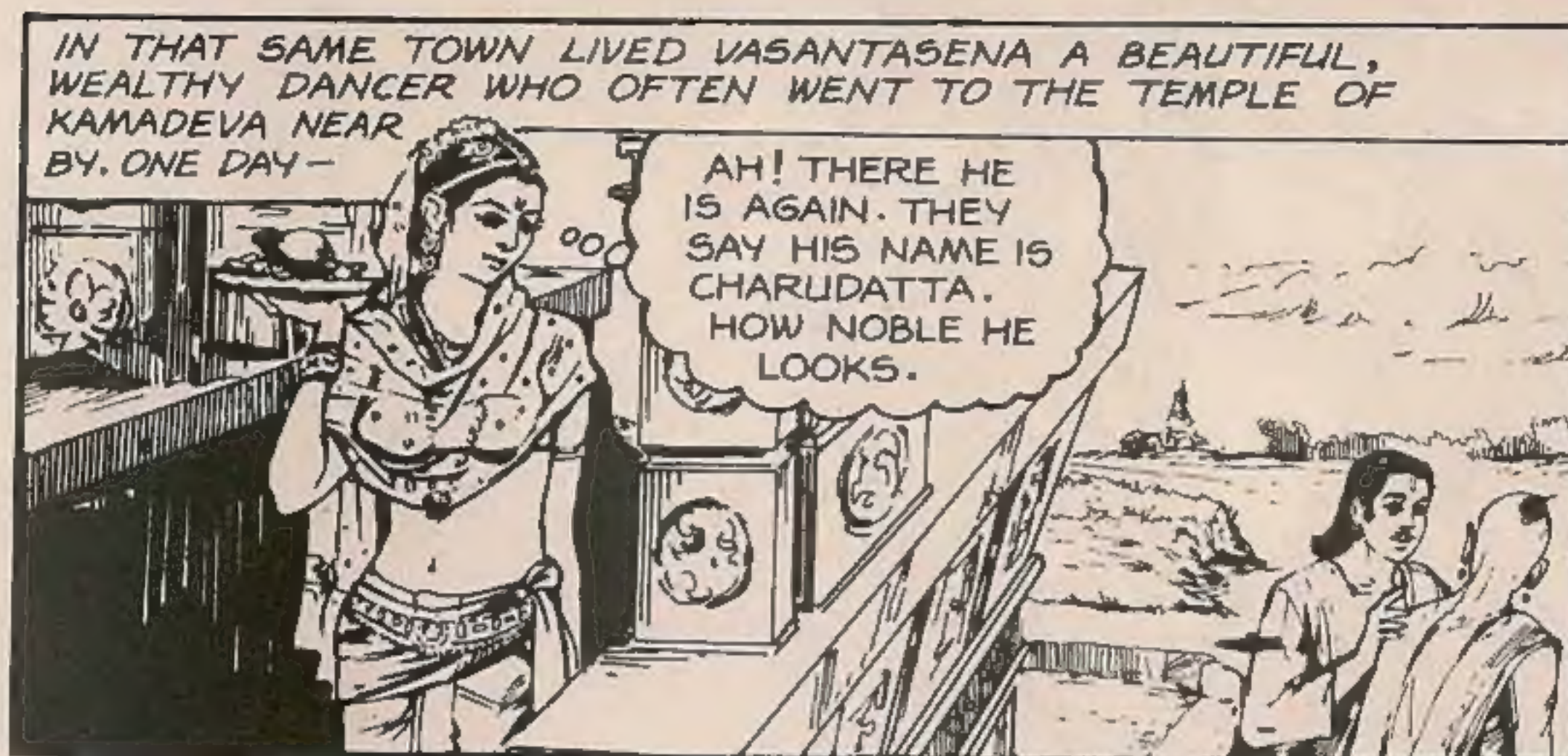
DURGADAS

SUKANYA

ANIRUDDHA

TUKARAM

OUR NEXT TITLE: **VASANTASENA**



PUBLISHED IN ENGLISH, HINDI, MARATHI, GUJARATI, AND KANNADA. AVAILABLE AT
ALL BOOKSTALLS OR **INDIA BOOK HOUSE** Secunderabad-3 (For V.P.P. orders only)

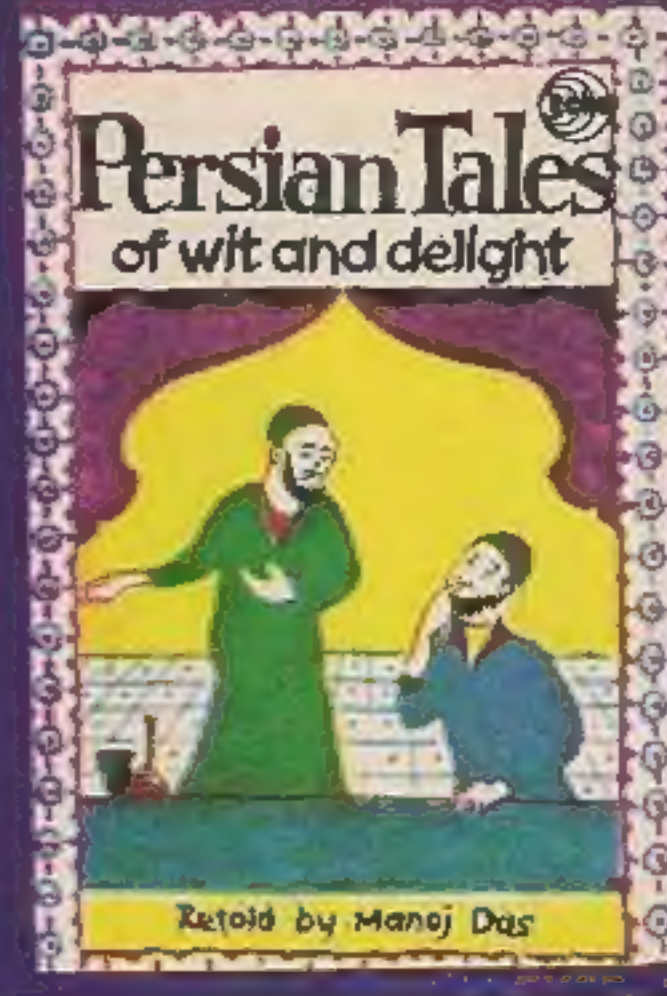
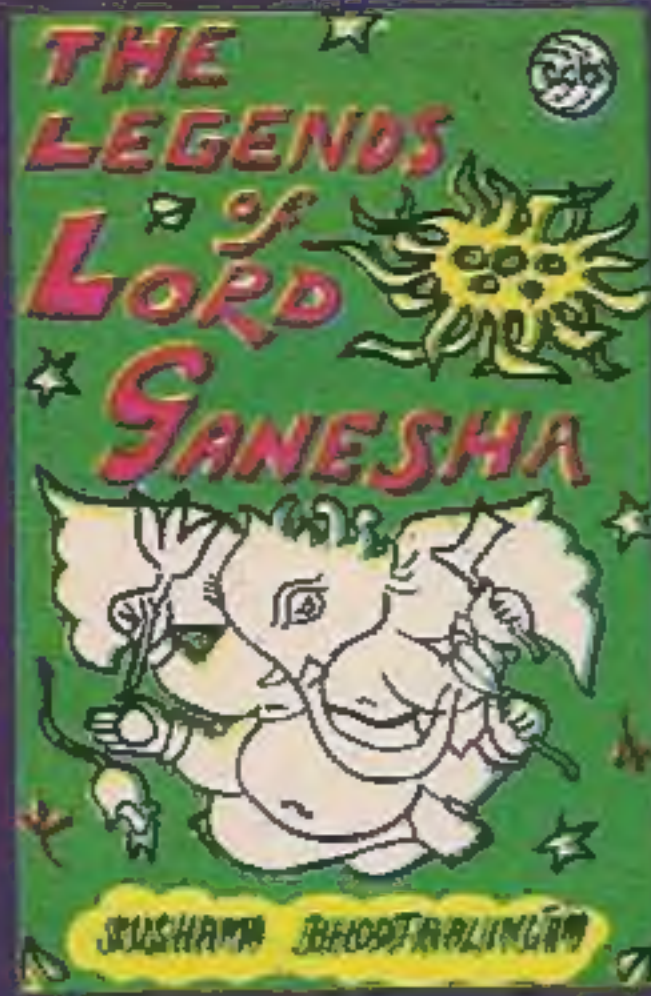


Mail in your coupons, once you have collected all twelve, to
INDIA BOOK HOUSE EDUCATION TRUST,
12 Hassa Mahal, 223, Cuffe Parade, Bombay 400 005. Mention the
title of your choice on the last coupon collected. There
will be an **ECHO** coupon in every new **AMAR CHITRA**
KATHA, starting from title No 61-Ghatotkacha
Make sure you don't miss a single new issue.

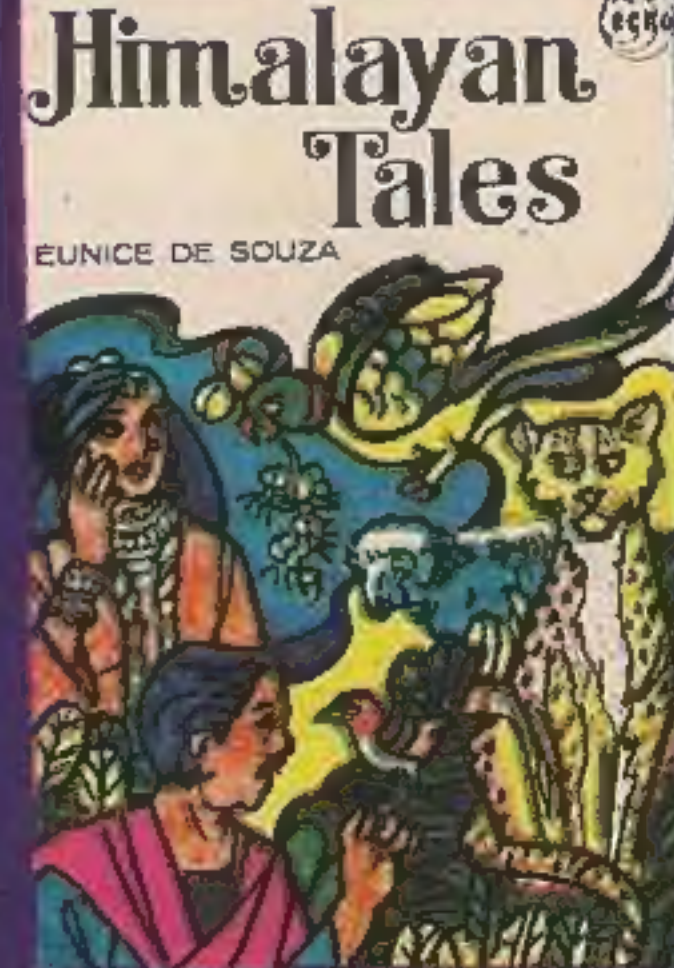
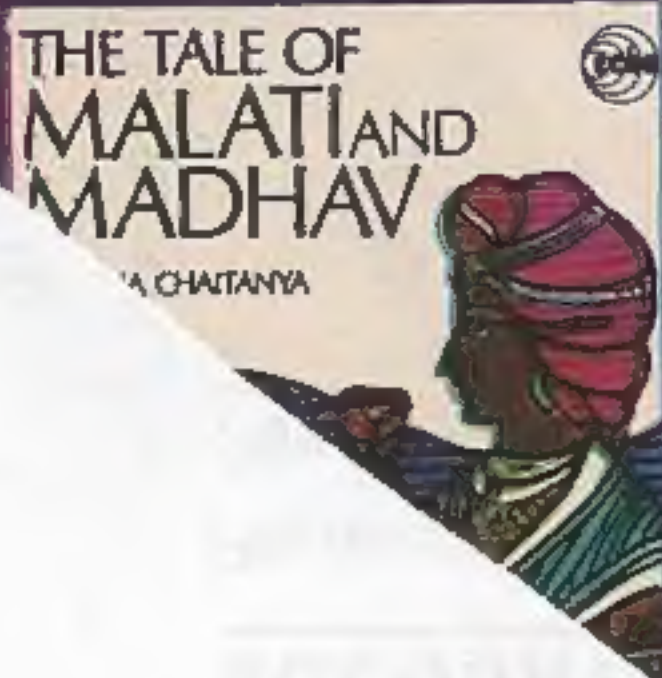
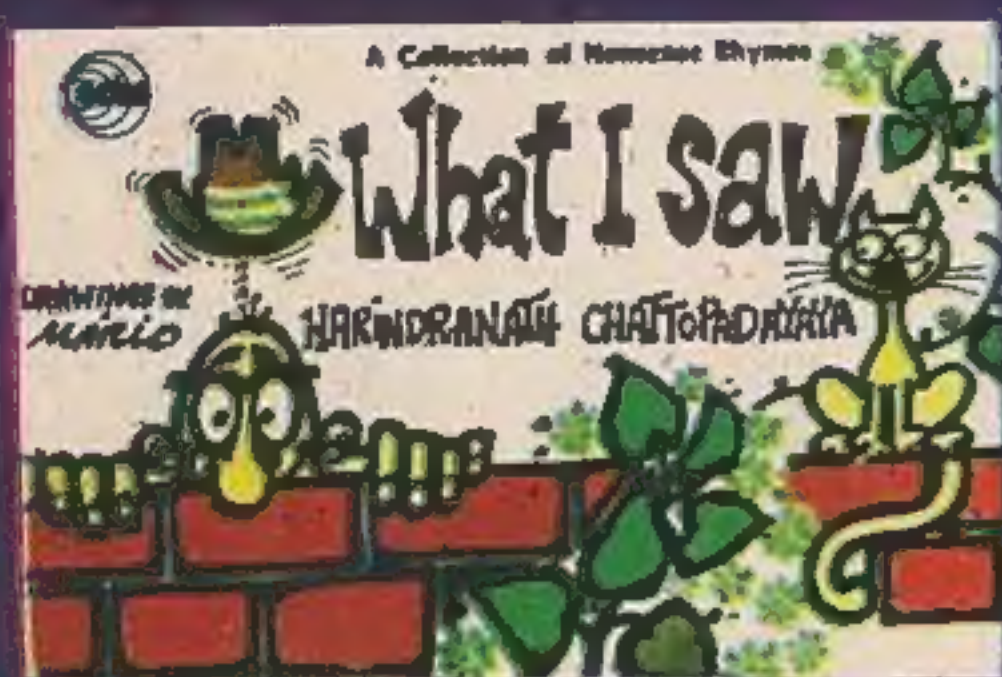
COLLECT AMAR CHITRA KATHA
COLLECT ECHO COUPONS and then
COLLECT YOUR FREE ECHO BOOK

Build your home Library of
ECHO BOOKS & AMAR CHITRA KATHA.

12 COUPONS will bring you **ONE** of
these interesting **ECHO** Books **FREE.**
Tear off and keep



ECHO BOOKS FOR CHILDREN



AT ALL BOOKSELLERS OR AT
RASHTRAPATI ROAD, SECUNDERABAD-3.